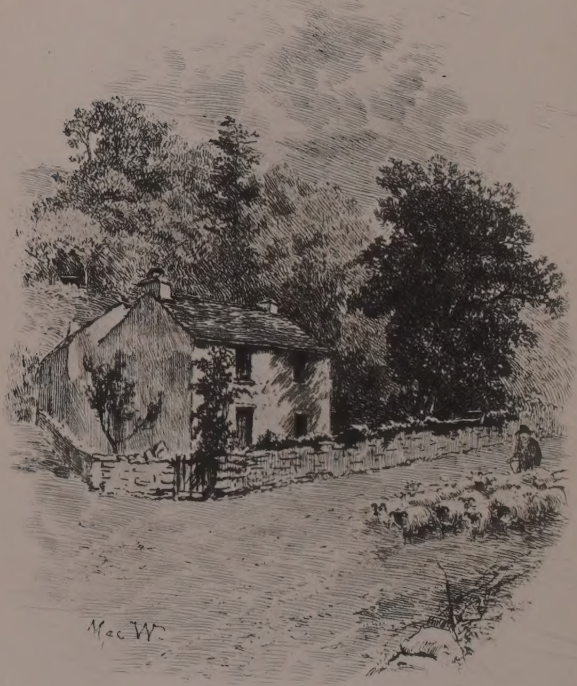


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LETTERS OF
THE WORDSWORTH FAMILY



Dove Cottage

LETTERS OF THE WORDSWORTH FAMILY

From 1787 to 1855

Collected and Edited
by
WILLIAM KNIGHT

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOLUME II

BOSTON AND LONDON
GINN AND COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
1907

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LETTERS OF THE WORDSWORTH FAMILY

1812

CCXLII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

GRASMERE, Feb. 6, 1812.

. . . I need scarcely say that literature has been the pursuit of my life; a life-pursuit, chosen (as I believe are those of most men distinguished by any particular features of character) partly from passionate liking, and partly from calculations of the judgment; and in some small degree from circumstances in which my youth was placed, that threw great difficulties in the way of my adopting that profession to which I was most inclined, and for which I was perhaps best qualified. I long hoped, depending upon my moderate desires, that the profits of my literary labours, added to the little which I possessed, would have answered all the rational wants of myself and my family. But in this I have been disappointed, and for these causes: firstly, the unexpected pressure of the times, falling most heavily upon men who have no regular means of increasing their income in proportion; secondly, I had erroneously calculated upon the degree in

which my writings were likely to suit the taste of the times; and lastly, much the most important part of my efforts cannot meet the public eye for many years, from the comprehensiveness of the subject. I may also add (but it is scarcely worth while) a fourth reason, viz.: an utter inability on my part to associate with any class or body of literary men, and thus subject myself to the necessity of sacrificing my own judgment, and of lending even indirectly countenance or support to principles, — either of taste, politics, morals, or religion — which I disapprove; and your lordship is not ignorant that, except writers engaged in mere drudgery, there are scarcely any authors, but those associated in this manner, who find literature, at this day, an employment attended with pecuniary gain.

The statement of these facts has been made, as your lordship will probably have anticipated, in order that if any office should be at your disposal (the duties of which would not call so largely upon my exertions as to prevent me from giving a considerable portion of time to study), it might be in your lordship's power to place me in a situation where, with better hope of success, I might advance towards the main object of my life, I mean the completion of my literary undertakings; and thereby contribute to the innocent gratification, and perhaps the solid benefit of many of my countrymen.

.

I have been emboldened to make this statement from a remembrance that my family has for several generations been honoured by the regard of that of your lordship, and that, in particular, my father and grandfather did, conscientiously I believe, discharge such trusts as were reposed in them from that connection.

CCXLIII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

GROSVENOR SQUARE, Tuesday, May 6th.

My dear Friend,

. . . I came to Town with a *determination* to confront Coleridge and Montagu upon this vile business. But Coleridge is most averse to it; and from the difficulty of procuring a fit person to act as referee in such a case, and from the hostility which M. and C. feel towards each other, I have yielded to C.'s wish, being persuaded that much more harm than good would accrue from the interview. I have not seen C., nor written to him. Lamb has been the medium of communication between us. C. intimated to me by a letter addressed to Lamb that he would transmit to me a statement, begun some time ago, in order to be sent to Miss Hutchinson, but discontinued on account of his having heard that she had "already *decided* against him." A very delicate proposal! Upon this I told Lamb that I should feel somewhat degraded by consenting to read a paper, begun with such an intention and discontinued upon such a consideration. Why talk about "*deciding*" in the case? Why, if in this decision she had judged amiss, not send the paper to rectify her error? or why draw out a paper at all whose object it was to win from the sister of my wife an opinion in his favour, and therefore to my prejudice, upon a charge of *injuries*, grievous injuries, done by me to him; before he had openly preferred his complaint to myself, the supposed author of these injuries? All this is unmanly, to say the least of it.

Upon coming home yesterday I found, however, a letter from him, a long one, written apparently and sent before

he could learn my mind from Lamb upon this proposal. The letter I have not opened; but I have just written to Lamb that if Coleridge will assure me that this letter contains nothing but a naked statement of what he believes Montagu said to him, I will read it and transmit it to Montagu, to see how their reports accord. And I will then give my own, stating what I believe myself to have said, under what circumstances I spoke, with what motive, and in what spirit. And there, I believe, the matter must end; only I shall admonish Coleridge to be more careful how he makes written and public mention of injuries done by me to him.

There is some dreadful foul play, and there are most atrocious falsehoods, in this business; the bottom of which, I believe, I shall never find, nor do I much care about it. All I want is to bring the parties for once to a naked and deliberate statement upon the subject, in order that documents may exist, to be referred to as the best authority which the case will admit. . . .

CCXLIV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Finished at 12 o'clock Sunday Night, May 12th.

My dear Friend,

. . . I now take up the pen in the midst of a storm of thunder, lightning, and rain. It was preceded by the most awful darkness I ever beheld, and accompanied by every accident that could add to the grandeur of a thunder storm — the most vivid sunbeams intermingled with darkness, and a rain-bow, a perfect arch spanning the vale slantways. . . .

We are become regular church-goers (we take it in turn !) for the sake of the children; and indeed Mr. Johnson, our present curate, appears to be so much in earnest, and is so unassuming and amiable a man, that I think we should often go, even if we had not the children, who seem to make it a duty to us. . . . We have had two letters from Charles Lamb lately. His dear sister shews signs of amendment, but is yet far from well. Lamb's last letter was written to desire us to forward all Coleridge's manuscripts. He has sold all his works to Longman (among the rest his tragedy) and they are to be published immediately. . . . You know that C. went to London with the Montagu's, and that their plan was to lodge him in their own house, and no doubt M. expected to have so much influence over him as to lead him into the way of following up his schemes with industry.

Montagu himself is the most industrious creature in the world, rises early and works late, but his health is by no means good, and when he goes from his labours rest of body and mind is absolutely necessary to him; and William perceived clearly that any interruption of his tranquillity would be a serious injury to him, and if to him consequently to his family. Further, he was convinced that if Coleridge took up his abode in M.'s house, they would soon part with mutual dissatisfaction; Montagu being the last man in the world to tolerate in another person (and that person an inmate with him) habits utterly discordant with his own. Convinced of these truths, William used many arguments to persuade M. that his purpose of keeping Coleridge comfortable could not be answered by their being in the same house together, but in vain. Montagu was resolved, "He would do all that could be done for him, and *would* have him at his house."

After this William spoke out, and told M. the nature of C.'s habits (nothing in fact but what everybody in whose house he has been for two days has seen for themselves), and Montagu then perceived that it would be better for C. to have lodgings near him. William intended to give C. advice to the same effect, but he had no opportunity of talking with him when C. passed through Grasmere on his way to London. Soon after they got to London Montagu wrote to William that on their road he had seen so much of C.'s habits that he was convinced he should be miserable under the same roof with him; and that he had repeated to C. what William had said to him, and that C. had been very angry. Now what could be so absurd as M.'s bringing forward William's communications as his reason for not wishing to have C. in the house with him, when he had himself, as he says, "seen a confirmation of all that William had said" in the very short time that they were together. So, however, he did, and William contented himself with telling M. that he thought he had done unwisely, and he gave him his reasons for thinking so.

We heard no more of this, or of C. in any way, except soon after his arrival in town, from Mrs. Montagu that he was well in health, powdered, etc., and talked of being busy; from Lamb, that he was in "good spirits and resolved to be orderly"; and from other quarters, to the like effect. But in a letter written by poor dear Mary Lamb, a few days before her last confinement, she says she "knows there is coolness between my brother and C." In consequence of this, I told her what had passed between M. and W., and assured her of the truth that there was no coolness on William's part. I of course received no answer to this letter, for she was taken away

before it reached London; and we heard no more of the matter till the other day, when Mrs. C. received a letter from Coleridge about this MS. in which he says — as an excuse for having written to no one, and having done nothing — that he had endured a series of injuries during the first month of his stay in London; but I will give you his own words, as reported to us by Mrs. C. She says, "He writes as one who had been cruelly injured." He says, "If you knew in detail of my most unprovoked sufferings for the first month after I left Keswick, and with what a thunderclap that *part* came upon me which gave the whole power of the anguish to all the rest, you would pity, you would less wonder at my conduct, or rather at my suspension of all conduct. You would know in short that a frenzy of the heart should produce some of the effects of a derangement of the brain," etc.

I suppose there is a good deal more of this, but she says he mentions no names except Mr. and Mrs. Morgan's. He says, "I leave it to Mrs. Morgan to inform you of my health and habits," adding that "to hers and her husband's kindness he owes it that he is now in his senses — in short, that he is *alive*." I must own that at first when I read all this my soul burned with indignation, that William should thus (by implication) be charged with having caused derangement in his friend's mind. A pretty story to be told. "Coleridge has been driven to madness by Wordsworth's cruel or unjust conduct towards him!" Would not anybody suppose that he had been guilty of the most atrocious treachery or cruelty? But what is the sum of all he did? He privately warned a common friend, disposed to serve C., with all his might, that C. had one or two habits which might disturb his tranquillity. He told him what those habits were, and a

greater kindness could hardly have been done to C., for it is not fit that he should go into houses where he is not already known. If he were to be told what was said at Penrith, after he had been at Anthony Harrison's, *then* he might be thankful to William. I am sure we suffered enough on that account, and were anxious enough to get him away. I say that at the first I was stung with indignation, but *that* soon subsided, and I was lost in pity for his miserable weakness.

It is certainly very unfortunate for William that he should be the person on whom he has to charge his neglect of duty, but to Coleridge the difference is nothing, for if this had not happened there would have been somebody else on whom to cast the blame. William wrote to Mrs. C. immediately, and wished her to transcribe his letter, or parts of it, for C., and told her that he would not write to C. himself, as he had not communicated his displeasure to him. Mrs. C. replies that she is afraid to do this, as C. did not desire her to inform us, and that it may prevent him from opening letters in future, etc. I ought to have told you that C. had a violent quarrel with Carlyle. . . .

CCXLV

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

GROSVENOR SQUARE, Thursday, June 4th.

My dear Friend,

. . . I shall tell you all that has passed between Coleridge and me. Upon the whole he appears more comfortable, and seems to manage himself much better than when he was at Grasmere. I have seen him several times, but

not much alone ; one morning we had, however, a pleasant walk to Hampstead together. I shall not advert in the hearing of anybody to what you communicate, in your last, concerning him. He certainly could not wish to wound you ; he is sensible that he has used you ill, and I fear dislikes to encounter disagreeable sensations, a dislike which augments in proportion as it is his duty to face them. These are the regulators and governors of his actions, to a degree that is pitiable and deplorable. . . .

CCXLVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Thomas De Quincey

[Postmark, 1812.]

My dear Friend,

I am grieved to the heart when I write to you, but you must bear the sad tidings. Our sweet little Catherine was seized with convulsions on Wednesday night. The fits continued till the morning, when she breathed her last. She had been in perfect health, and looked unusually well. Her leg and arm had gained strength, and we were full of hope. In short, we had sent the most delightful accounts to her poor mother. It is a great addition to our affliction that her father and mother were not here to see her in the last happy weeks of her short life. She never forgot Quincey. Dear innocent, she now lies upon her mother's bed, a perfect image of peace. This to me was a soothing spectacle after having beheld her struggles. It is an unspeakable consolation to us that we are assured that no foresight could have prevented the disease in this last instance ; and that it was not occasioned by any negligence, or improper food.

The disease lay in the brain, and if it had been possible for her to recover, it is much to be feared that she would not have retained the faculties of her mind. God bless you!

Yours affectionately,

D. WORDSWORTH.

We have written to my brother, and he will proceed immediately into Wales to impart the sad intelligence to my sister. You will be pleased to hear that Mary Dawson has been very kind in her attentions to us. John has been greatly afflicted, but he has begun to admit consolation. The funeral will be on Monday afternoon. I wish you had been here to follow your darling to her grave.

CCXLVII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[KENDAL, July 31, 1812.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . It was a warm and beautiful day, and I sat upon the stones close to the water at the end of the walk, — a long long time. The trees near the house [1] are very much grown, and the walks are perfectly shady; but the axe ought to have been used amongst them long ago. I fear that it is now so late that the trees will never forget their early confinement, and perhaps in general it would be better to leave them as they are. Your hops remain and the Virgin's bower; but only one half of the porch is covered, that nearest to Wood-side. . . . We spent Tuesday afternoon in a walk to Hackett. . . . We had

[1] Probably Eusemere. — Ed.

a very pleasant afternoon. Tillbrook stationed himself upon a rock, and sounded his flute to the great delight of our own party.[1] . . .

CCXLVIII

William Wordsworth to Daniel Stuart

GRASMERE, October 13, 1812.

My dear Sir,

I ought to have thanked you long since for the trouble you took, at my request, concerning the French prisoners. In consequence of your representation, I declined interfering any further in the business. I wish now to trouble you about a matter concerning myself, presuming upon the kindness which you have always shown me.

Our powerful neighbour, Lord Lonsdale, has lately shown a particular wish to serve me, having most kindly given me an assurance that he will use his influence to procure for me any situation which falls within the range of his patronage, the salary of which would be an object to me, and the duties not so heavy as to engross too much of my time. His Lordship was so good as to express a regret that some time might elapse before such a place might become vacant, and he added that, if I knew of anything, though not within the circle of his immediate influence, he would be happy to exert himself in my behalf, if he were persuaded there were any chance of success.

. . . Will you then be so kind as to point out to me anything which is likely to answer my purpose that may come to your knowledge? . . . I have no objection, I may

[1] The Rev. Samuel Tilbrooke, of Peterhouse, Cambridge, who had settled at Ivy cottage, Rydal. He is referred to in the sonnet beginning, "The fairest, brightest hues of ether fade." — Ed.

add, to quit this part of the country, provided the salary be adequate, and the duty what I am equal to without being under the necessity of withdrawing myself wholly from literature, which I find an unprofitable concern. . . . With great regard,

Yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCXLIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

1812.

. . . I am glad to think that you will see Coleridge. Poor soul! I only think of him now with my wonted affection, and with tender feelings of compassion for his infirmities. We have had several letters from him. Our sorrow has sunk into him, and he loved the darling the best of all our little ones. He talks of coming down as soon as possible, if his play succeeds. I hope it will, and then I am confident he will come. Mrs. C. is just the same as ever, full of troubles — one wiping away the other — full of bustle, and full of complaints, yet not against him. There is one comfort that nothing hurts her; otherwise it would be very painful to think of her, for cause enough she has had for complaint. . . .

CCL

William Wordsworth to Thomas De Quincey

Tuesday Evening, [December 1, 1812.]

My very dear Friend,

We have had measles in the house, and I write under great affliction. Thomas was seized a few days ago, i.e., last Thursday. He was held most favourably till eleven

this morning, when a change suddenly took place; and, with sorrow of heart I write, he died, sweet innocent, about six this afternoon. His sufferings were short, and I think not severe. Pray come to us as soon as you can. My sister is not at home. Mrs. Wordsworth bears her loss with striking fortitude, and Miss Hutchinson is as well as can be expected. My sister will be here to-morrow.

Most tenderly and truly, with heavy sorrow for you, my dear friend, I remain,

Yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCLI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

GRASMERE, Dec. 27, 1812.

. . . After mature consideration, I have resolved to trust to the first feelings excited by your letter; these were rather to owe any addition to my income required by me to your friendship than to the Government, or to any other quarter where it was not in my power to return what, in the common sentiments of men, would be deemed an equivalent. Asking permission therefore to retract my former determination, which I am encouraged to do by the personal intercourse, and marks of regard with which you have since distinguished me, and by the inscrutable delicacy of your last letter, I feel no scruple in saying that I shall with pride and pleasure accept annually the sum offered by your lordship until the office has become vacant, or some other change takes place in my circumstances, which might render it unnecessary. I cannot forbear to add that I feel more satisfaction from this decision, because my opinions would not lead me to

decline accepting a pension from Government on the ground that literary men make some sacrifice of independence by such acceptance, and are consequently degraded. The constitution gives to the crown this power of rewarding acknowledged ability, and it is not possible to imagine a more worthy employment of a certain portion of the revenue. But it seems to me that the provisions made by our Government for the support of literature are far too scanty, and in this respect our practice is much inferior to that of other countries, where talents of importance to mankind and to posterity — but which from that very cause can bring little emolument to the possessor of them, and which demand all the thought of all his life — are undoubtedly (where they are understood) fostered and honoured, even as a point of pride. This is the case in Germany, and in France. . . . Now, as to the general question, it may be laid down as undeniable, that if to bestow be a *duty* (and an *honourable* duty), to accept cannot be otherwise than *honourable*. . . .

CCLII

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

AMBLESIDE, Sunday Night, Dec. 27, 1812.

. . . We have suffered as much anguish as it is possible to undergo in a like case, for he[1] was a child of heavenly disposition, meek, simple, innocent, unoffending, affectionate, tender-hearted, passionately fond of knowledge, ardent in the discharge of his duty, but in everything else mild and peaceful. I trust that Almighty God has received him amongst the number of the blessed. . . .

[1] His boy Thomas. — Ed.

1813

CCLIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Elizabeth Threlkeld

January 19th, 1813.

You remember him,[1] a lovely child, with a heavenly sweetness in his countenance which he preserved to the last, an innocence as pure as at the day of his birth. . . . Thomas was, of all the children, that one who caused us the least pain, and who gave us the purest delight. He was affectionate, sweet-tempered, ardent in the pursuit of learning, invariably doing his duty without effort or interference on the part of others, and above all he had a simplicity which was his own, an infantine innocence which marked him as not of this world. . . .

[Of Rydal Mount, whither they were going, she said] It is the pleasantest residence in this neighbourhood, in perfect repair, comfortable and convenient, and is in the very situation which in the happiest of our days we chose as the most delightful in the country. . . .

CCLIV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

Jan. 24th, [1813.]

. . . I go on as usual with my daily pursuits, and I trust I do not repine at the loss of that beloved child,

[1] Her nephew. — Ed.

who is returned whence he so lately came, as pure a spirit as ever was received into those regions. Untainted he remained in this world, and is now happy, and gone but a few years before us. So I feel, so I think of him; yet my tears will flow, I cannot help it. His very self is so vivid in my mind, it is like a perpetual presence. You know how I loved him when he was alive, how I prized his promising virtues. My heart is full of the sweet image of him whom I shall see no more. At times, when I muse on a future life and on his blessedness, I lose the thoughts of anguish. The child becomes spiritualized to my mind. I wish I could have such musings more frequently, and longer; but as long as I have breath, thy grave, beloved child, will be remembered by me with pensive sadness. . . . At times I think my brother looks ten years older since the death of Thomas. I hope we shall not remain more than two months or ten weeks longer in this house; and you must come and see us when we get to the other.[1] It is a place that, ten years ago, I should have almost danced with joy if I could have dreamed it would ever be ours. . . .

CCLV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

RYDAL MOUNT, Thursday Morning, 1813.

Arrived yesterday. The weather is delightful, and the place a paradise; but my inner thoughts will go back to Grasmere. I was the last person who left the house yesterday evening. It seemed as quiet as the grave; and

[1] Rydal Mount. — Ed.

the very church-yard, where our darlings lie, when I gave it a last look, seemed to cheer my thoughts. There I could think of life and immortality. The house only reminded me of desolate gloom, emptiness, and cheerless silence. But why do I now turn to these things? The morning is bright, and I am more cheerful. . . .

CCLVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Thursday, April 8th, [1813.]

. . . When we had been informed by a person to whom Mr. North had said it, that he had nothing left in the house[1] but a few bottles, William wrote a note requesting Mr. N.'s permission to enter upon the house; and giving his reasons in a very delicate manner, *hinting* plainly at the most important one, and we received an answer, couched in civil terms, to the following effect: that Mr. N. would be happy to accommodate Mr. W. as soon as he had got preparations made for the reception of at least nine cart loads of goods which were yet in the house. Now these goods are the wine in his cellars, and he has bins to make for his wine at Ambleside. Would not any one but himself have requested permission to keep the wine locked up in the cellars, and have given the free use of the house which he no longer wanted himself? It is three weeks or more since the house was empty, and we hear nothing further, so we shall not remove till May day. . . .

But this leads me to the green graves in the corner of our church-yard (and let that ground be peaceful!) and I

[1] Rydal Mount. — Ed.

feel now that my heart is going to struggle with unbefitting sorrow while I talk of resignation; but I trust the time will come when all the tears I shed shall be tears of hope and quiet tenderness. Yet if you had known Thomas, if you had seen him, if you had felt the hopes which his innocent, intelligent, eager, yet *most* innocent and heavenly, countenance raised in our hearts many a time when we silently looked upon him, you would wonder that we have been able to bear the loss of him as well as we have borne it; but with a humbled spirit I must confess we have not been submitted as we ought to have been.

I have laid down the pen for some minutes and I can write upon other matters less deeply interesting. Yet once more, blessings be on his grave — that turf which his pure feet so often have trod.

My dear friend, as to Coleridge you have done all that can be done, and we are grieved that you have had so much uneasiness, and taken so much trouble about him. He will not let himself be served by others. Oh, that the day may ever come when he will serve himself! Then will his eyes be opened, and he will see clearly that we have loved him always, do still love him, and have ever loved — not measuring his deserts. I do not now wish him to come into the North; that is, I do not wish him to do it for the sake of any wish to gratify us. But if he should do it of himself I should be glad as the best sign that he was endeavouring to perform his duties. His conduct to you has been selfish and unfeeling in the extreme, which makes me hope no good of him at present, especially as I hear from all quarters so much of his confident announcement of plans for this musical drama, that comedy, the other essay. Let him doubt, and his

powers will revive. Till then they must sleep. God bless him. He little knows with what tenderness we have lately thought of him, nor how entirely we are softened to all sense of injury. We have had no thoughts of him but such as ought to have made him lean upon us with confidential love, and fear not to confess his weaknesses.

The boys come to us almost every week. Hartley is as odd as ever, and in the weak points of his character resembles his father very much; but he is not prone to sensual indulgence — quite the contrary — and has not one expensive habit. Derwent is to me a much more interesting boy. He is very clever. I should wish him to be put in the way of some profession in which *scientific* knowledge would be useful; for his mind takes that turn. He is uncommonly acute and accurate. William will now be enabled to assist in sending Hartley to college; but of course this must not be mentioned; for the best thing that can happen to his father will be that he should suppose that the whole care of putting Hartley forward must fall upon himself. . . .

CCLVII

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,
August 28th, 1813.

My dear Wrangham,

Your letter arrived when I was upon the point of going from home on business. I took it with me, intending to answer it upon the road; but I had not courage to undertake the office on account of the inquiries it contains

concerning my family. I will be brief on this melancholy subject. In the course of the last year I have lost two sweet children, a girl and a boy, at the ages of four and six and a half. These innocents were the delight of our hearts, and beloved by everybody that knew them. They were cut off in a few hours — one by measles, and the other by convulsions — dying one half a year after the other. I quit this sorrowful subject, secure of your sympathy as a father and as my friend.

I have transmitted the request in your letter to my brother, so that no doubt you will hear from him; but this act of duty I have only discharged to-day, from want of fortitude.

My employment [1] I find salutary to me, and of consequence in a pecuniary point of view; as my *literary* employments bring me no emoluments, nor promise any. As to what you say about the Ministry, I very much prefer the course of their policy to that of the Opposition, especially on two points most near my heart, resistance of Buonaparte by force of arms, and their adherence to the principles of the British Constitution in withholding political power from the Roman Catholics. My most determined hostility shall always be directed against those statesmen, who — like Whitbread, Grenville, and others — would crouch to a sanguinary tyrant; and I cannot act with those who see no danger to the Constitution in introducing papists into Parliament.

There are other points of policy on which I deem the Opposition grievously mistaken; and therefore I am at present, and long have been by principle, a supporter of the Ministry, as far as my little influence extends.

[1] That of Distributor of Stamps for the County of Westmoreland. — Ed.

With affectionate wishes for your welfare and that of your family, and with best regards to Mrs. Wrangham,

I am, my dear friend,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCLVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[No date. 1813.]

. . . But now I must tell you of our grandeur. We are going to have a Turkey carpet in the dining-room, and a Brussels in William's study. You stare, and the simplicity of the dear Town-End Cottage comes before your eyes, and you are tempted to say, "Are they changed, are they setting up for fine folks?" No, no, you do not make such a guess; but you want an explanation, and I must give it you. The Turkey carpet (it is a large room) will cost twenty-two guineas, and a Scotch carpet would cost nine or ten. The Turkey will last out four Scotch, therefore will be the cheaper, and will never be shabby.

. . . The study is furnished with a large book-case, some chairs that we had at Allan Bank painted black, and Sir George Beaumont's pictures, and looks very neat. We have got window curtains for it, and a nice writing-table. . . . The house is very comfortable, and most convenient, though far from being as good a house as we expected. We had never seen the inside of it till we came to live in it. We have three kitchens, one of which is called the *deep* kitchen. The grate is decked out by the

kitchen maid with flourishing green boughs, which are only displaced when this same kitchen is used as a laundry. At other times the clock lives there in perfect solitude, except that it has the company of two white tables and other appropriate furniture. . . . We are all gardeners, especially Sarah, who is mistress and superintendent of that concern. I am contented to work under her, and Mary does her share, and sometimes we work very hard, and this is a great amusement to us, though sad thoughts often come between.

Thomas was a darling in a garden, our best helper, steady to his work, always pleased. God bless his memory. I see him wherever I turn, beautiful innocent that he was. He had a slow heavenly up-turning of his large blue eyes that is never to be forgotten. Would that you had seen him! But, my dear friend, why have I turned to this subject? Because I write to you what comes uppermost, the pen following the heart, but no more. You must, indeed you must, come next year. I never talk of next year's plans, but I think of death. Come however you must, if you live, whether we are *all* alive or not. It is the place of all others for you, so dry that you need never have a wet foot after the heaviest shower; and the prospect so various and beautiful that an invalid or a weakly person might be accused of discontentedness who should wish for anything else, or repine at not being able to go further than round our garden. . . . We have such a terrace for you to walk upon, and such a seat at the end of it. . . .

CCLIX

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

[No date.]

. . . We want no pensions and reversions for our heirs, and no monuments by public or private subscription. *We shall have a monument in our works, if they survive.* If they do not, we should not deserve it. So with regard to a lease from the dictum of the Privy Council, if our works cease to be called for, the privilege would be but a mockery, and an occasion of malignant sarcasm from the evil disposed. . . .

Ever affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

1814

CCLX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[Undated, written probably in January, 1814.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . I feel that much of the knowledge which I had formerly gained from books has slipped from me, and it is grievous to think that hardly one new idea has come in by that "means." This in itself would be no great evil, but the sorrows of this life weaken the memory so much that I find reading of far less use than it used to be to me; and if it were not that my feelings were as much alive as ever, there would be a growing tendency in the mind to barrenness. . . .

Southey is in London. Perhaps that may bring Coleridge down. He *ought* to come down to see after Hartley, who wants removing to another school before he goes to college; for his oddities increase daily, and he wants other discipline. But, because he ought to come, I fear he will not; and how is H. to be sent to college? These perplexities no doubt glance across his mind like dreams, but nothing will rouse him to his duty *as duty*. . . .

CCLXI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 9, 1814.

. . . Every one knows of what importance the equestrian order was in preserving tranquillity and a balance and gradation of power in ancient Rome ; the like may take place among ourselves through the medium of an armed yeomanry ; and surely a preservative of this kind is largely called for by the tendencies of things at present. . . . If the whole island was covered with a force of this kind, the Press properly curbed, the Poor Laws gradually reformed, provision made for new Churches to keep pace with the population (an indispensable measure) if these things were done and other improvements carried forward as they have been, order may yet be preserved among us, and the people remain free and happy. . . .

CCLXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

April 22nd.

My dear Friend,

. . . The poem [1] is to be published. We females have been very anxious that it should, and for the reason you mentioned. Besides that we think it will sell, first, because we think that the story will bear it up, in spite of that spirit that is above the common level of the present state of public knowledge and taste ; and, secondly, because the buzz of the lectures will help it. Poor

[1] *The White Doe of Rylstone.* — Ed.

Coleridge ! he has indeed fought a good fight, and I hope he will not yield ; but come to us having accomplished a perfect victory. . . .

CCLXIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

KESWICK, Sunday, April 24th, [1814.]

. . . I should have wished to be at home, for William is actually printing nine books of his long poem. It has been copied in my absence, and great alterations have been made some of which indeed I had an opportunity of seeing during my week's visit. But the printing has since been going on briskly, and not one proof-sheet has yet met my eyes. We are all most thankful that William has brought his mind to consent to printing so much of this work ; for the MSS. were in such a state that, if it had pleased Heaven to take him from this world, they would have been almost useless. I do not think the book will be published before next winter ; but, at the same time, will come out a new edition of his poems in two volumes octavo,[1] and shortly afterwards, *Peter Bell*,[2] *The White Doe*,[3] and *Benjamin the Waggoner*.[4] . . .

He is gone ; the darling who loved his books, and whom his father used to contemplate as the future companion of his studies.[5] Why do I turn to these sad

[1] Published in 1815. — Ed.

[2] First published in 1819. — Ed.

[3] First published in 1815. — Ed.

[4] First published in 1819. — Ed.

[5] Thomas Wordsworth, who died at the parsonage in the previous year. — Ed.

thoughts! Oh! my dearest friend, the pangs which the recollection of that heavenly child causes me it is hard to stifle; and many a struggle have I had, — in all situations, in company and alone, and when in converse as now with you, — but I trust there is no wickedness in this which is unavoidable. I am reconciled, and resigned, and cheerful, except when the struggle is upon me. His poor mother was shaken bitterly by Catherine's death and I fear she never will be the same cheerful creature as heretofore. When left to herself she is dejected, and often weeps bitterly; but I must turn to other subjects. Willy is a dear child — exceptionally lively and very clever — but utterly averse to books! This I think is entirely owing to his having been so much indulged. . . . To the last page I am come, and not a word of the Emperor Alexander, the King of France or the fallen Monarch! Surely it must seem to us, encircled by these mountains, that our own little concerns outweigh the mighty joys and sorrows of nations; or I could not have been so long silent. . . . He [Buonaparte] should have been tried for the murders of the Duc d' Enghien,[1] of Pichegru,[2] of Captain Wright,[3] of Palm[4] — of one or all; and what a pension they have granted him! This is folly, rather than liberality; for of what use can a large income be in an island without luxuries, and without company. He can have no wants beyond a bare maintenance. . . .

[1] L. A. H. de Bourbon, Duc d' Enghien, executed by Buonaparte in 1804. — Ed.

[2] Charles Pichegru (1761–1804). — Ed.

[3] Captain John Wesley Wright (1769–1805). — Ed.

[4] John Philip Palm, of Nuremberg, shot by Napoleon in 1806. — Ed.

CCLXIV

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

April 26, 1814.

. . . I am busy with the printers' devils. A portion of a long poem [1] from me will see the light ere long. I hope it will give you pleasure. It is serious, and has been written with great labour. . . .

CCLXV

William Wordsworth to Thomas Poole

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,
April 28th, 1814.

My dear Poole,

I have long thought of writing to you upon the situation of Hartley Coleridge, and have only been prevented by considerations of delicacy towards his father, whose exertions on behalf of this child I hoped would have rendered any interference of the friends of the family unnecessary. But I cannot learn that poor Coleridge has mustered courage to look this matter fairly in the face ; it is therefore incumbent on his friends to do their best to prevent the father's weaknesses being ruinous to the son. Hartley is now seventeen years and a half old ; and, therefore, no time is to be lost in determining upon his future course in life.

Knowing your attachment to Coleridge and to his family, and that Coleridge is now residing at no great distance from you, I beg that you would contrive to see and converse with him upon this subject. I do not expect that Coleridge will be able to do anything himself,

[1] *The Excursion.* — Ed.

but his consent will be indispensable before any of his friends can openly stir in exertions for Hartley. It is a subject on every side attended with difficulties ; for in the first place it is not easy to determine what the youth is fit for. His talents appear to be very considerable, but not of that kind which may be *confidently* relied upon as a security for an independence in any usual course of exertion. His attainments also, though in some departments far exceeding the common measure of those of his age, are extremely irregular ; and he is deficient in much valuable knowledge both of books and things that might have been gained at a public school. But could he be *immediately* sent for one year to a school of this kind, I should be emboldened to hope somewhat confidently that such a preparation would enable him to go successfully through either of the Universities.

It avails little to think or write much about this, till a fund has been secured for his maintenance till he can support himself, in whatever course of life may be determined upon. Now, I know of nobody who has declared intentions to contribute to this but Lady Beaumont, who has most kindly offered to advance thirty pounds a year towards maintaining Hartley at the University. Southey has a little world dependent upon his industry ; and my own means are not more than my family requires ; but something I would willingly contribute, and if it were convenient to you to assist him in this way or any other, it would encourage one to make applications elsewhere. But in all this I defer to you, and wish to know what you advise, and most happy shall I be to join in anything you recommend.

Having said all that appears necessary on this subject, I cannot but add to an old friend two or three words

about myself, though you probably will have heard from others how I am going on. I live at present in a most delightful situation; and have a public employment which is a comfortable addition to my income, but I pay £100 per annum out of it to my predecessor, and it falls nearly another 100 below the value at which my noble patron — Lord Lonsdale — had been led to estimate it.

My marriage has been as happy as man's could be, saving that we have lost two sweet children (out of five), a boy and girl of the several ages of six and a half and four years. This was a heavy affliction to us, as they were as amiable and promising creatures as a house could be blest with. My poetical labours have often suffered long interruptions; but I have at last resolved to send to the press a portion of a poem which, if I live to finish it, I hope future times will "not willingly let die." These you know are the words of my great predecessor, and the depth of my feelings upon some subjects seems to justify me in the act of applying them to myself, while speaking to a friend, who I know has always been partial to me.

When you write, speak of yourself and your family. I hear wonders of a niece of yours. May we not hope to see you here? Let it not be during my absence. I shall be from home at least for six weeks during the ensuing summer, meaning to take a tour in Scotland with my wife and her sister. My sister joins in affectionate remembrances to you; and I shall say for my wife that she will be most happy to see you in this place, with which I venture to promise that you will be much pleased. Believe me, my dear Poole,

Most faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCLXVI

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

RYDAL MOUNT, May 5, 1814.

My dear Sir,

Some little time since, in consequence of a distressful representation made to me of the condition of some person connected nearly by marriage with Mrs. Wordsworth, I applied to our common friend Mr. Sharp to know if he had any means of procuring an admittance into Christ's Hospital, for a child of one of the parties. His reply was such as I feared it would be. . . . He referred me to you. . . . I have to thank you for a present of your volume of poems, received some time since, through the hands of Southey. I have read it with great pleasure. The Columbus[1] is what you intended. It has many bright and striking passages, and poems upon this plan please better on a second perusal than the first. The *gaps*[2] at first disappoint and vex you.

There is a pretty piece in which you have done me the honour of imitating me towards the conclusion particularly, where you must have remembered the Highland Girl.[3] I like the poem much; but the first paragraph is hurt by two apostrophes, to objects of different character, one to Luss, and one to your sister, and the apostrophe is not a figure that like Janus carries two faces with a good grace.

I am about to print (do not start) eight thousand lines, which is but a small portion of what I shall oppress the

[1] *The Voyage of Columbus* (1812). — Ed.

[2] The "gaps" refer to the numerous starred lines (* * * *) within the several cantos. — Ed.

[3] The poem *Written in the Highlands of Scotland, September 2, 1812.* — Ed.

world with, if strength and life do not fail me. I shall be content if the publication pays the expenses; for Mr. Scott, and your friend Lord Byron, flourishing at the rate they do, how can an honest poet hope to thrive?

I expect to hear of your taking flight to Paris, unless the convocation of emperors and other personages by which London is to be honoured, detain you to assist at the festivities.

For me, I would like dearly to see old Blucher, but as the fates will not allow, I mean to recompense myself by an excursion with Mrs. Wordsworth to Scotland, where I hope to fall in occasionally with a ptarmigan, a roe, or an eagle; and the living bird I certainly should prefer to its image on the panel of a dishonoured emperor's coach.

Farewell. I shall be happy to see you here at all times, for your company is a treat.

Most truly yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCLXVII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

May 24, 1814.

. . . Unwilling that what I cannot but think the errors of the bullionists should be laid open, I wrote to Mr. Southey, begging his interest with the editor of the Q. R. to procure the reviewing of the pamphlets on this subject for Mr. De Quincey, editor of the *Westmoreland Gazette*. Mr. Southey wrote in reply, "I fear the Q. R. would be closed against De Q.'s opinions upon the Bullion question, as it is against *mine on the Catholics*." (Mr. Southey is an enemy to further concessions.) "And indeed

more certainly because some years ago it took the wrong side upon that subject; and consistency in a political error is the only kind of consistency to be expected in a journal of this kind. This I am sorry for, because if De Quincey could bring his reasonings before the public through a favourable channel I think he would go far towards exploding a mischievous error." From this extract it may be seen that these Reviews value above everything the keeping up the notion of their own mysterious infallibility. It is probable that the Q. R. is closed against the opponents of the Catholic claims, in consequence of its having espoused the other side, through the influence of Mr. Canning over the editor. The great circulation of the two Reviews, *The Quarterly* and *The Edinburgh*, has been very injurious to free discussion, by making it almost insurmountably difficult for any writer, not holding a public situation, to obtain a hearing, if his opinions should not suit either of these periodical publications. . . .

CCLXVIII

William Wordsworth to Viscount Lowther

[No date?]

Do you suppose that Tierney is really sincere in his declaration that he adopts the positions of the Report of the Bullion Committee of which Horner was chairman? If he does, he has studied political economy to little purpose. For instance, what an assertion that gold had not risen in value, it was only that paper had fallen! This is theory trampling upon fact; upon a consequence arising from the state of Europe obvious, one would have thought, to a child. . . .

CCLXIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

HINDWELL, RADNOR,
Sunday Night, 9th October, [1814.]

. . . Hazlitt's review[1] appeared in the *Examiner*. It is not half so good a review as I should have thought he would have written; for, with all his disagreeable qualities, he is a very clever fellow. He says that the narrative parts of the poem are a dead weight upon it; but speaks in raptures of the philosophical. Now we have no doubt that the narrative will be liked the best by most readers; therefore, we are most glad to hear that the religious and philosophical parts are relished. Of their merit I cannot entertain the faintest shadow of a doubt; yet I am afraid that, for a time, an outcry will be raised by many readers and many reviewers, which may injure the sale. . . .

CCLXX

William Wordsworth to Robert Pearce Gillies[2]

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 12, 1814.

You are a most indulgent and good-natured critic, or I think you would hardly have been so much pleased with *Yarrow Visited*. We think it heavier than my things generally are, and nothing but a wish to show to Mr. Hogg that my inclination towards him, and his proposed

[1] Of *The Excursion*. — Ed.

[2] The editor of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, and author of *Memoirs of a Literary Veteran* (1851). — Ed.

work, were favourable, could have induced me to part with it in that state. I have composed three new stanzas in place of the three first, and another to be inserted before the two last, and have made some alterations in other parts ; therefore, when you see Mr. Hogg, beg from me that he will not print the poem till he has read the copy which I have added to Miss E. Wilson's MS., as I scarcely doubt, notwithstanding the bias of first impressions, that he will prefer it.

In the same MS. you will find a sonnet addressed to yourself,[1] which I should have mentioned before, but for a reason of the same kind as kept you silent on the subject of yours. I am not a little concerned that you continue to suffer from morbid feelings, and still more that you regard them as incurable. . . . But this I can confidently say, that poetry and the poetic spirit will either help you, or harm you, as you use them. If you find in yourself more of the latter effect than of the former, forswear the Muses, and apply tooth and nail to law, to mathematics, to mechanics, to anything, only escape from your insidious foe. But if you are benefited by your intercourse with the lyre, then give yourself up to it, with the enthusiasm which I am sure is natural to you. I should like to be remembered to Mr. Lappenberg,[2] to Mr. Hogg, and our friends in Queen Street, of course. Mr. Sharpe, I hope, does not forget me. Adieu, most faithfully, and with great respect. Yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

[1] See the lines beginning, " From the dark chamber of dejection freed," in Vol. IV of *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, pp. 3, 4, and the accompanying note on Gillies. — Ed.

[2] Mr. Lappenberg translated into German *We are Seven*, *To a Butterfly*, and several others of Wordsworth's poems. — Ed.

CCLXXI

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 23, 1814.

My dear Sir,

. . . I have to thank you for *Egbert*, which is pleasingly and vigorously written, and proves that with a due sacrifice of exertion, you will be capable of performing things that will have a strong claim on the regards of posterity. But keep, I pray you, to the great models; there is in some parts of this tale — particularly page four — too much of a bad writer, Lord Byron; and I will observe that towards the conclusion the intervention of the peasant is not only unnecessary, but injurious to the tale, inasmuch as it takes away from that species of credibility on which it rests. I have peeped into *The Ruminator*, and turned to your first letter, which is well executed, and seizes the attention very agreeably. Your longer poem I have barely looked into, but I promise myself no inconsiderable pleasure in the perusal of this.

I thank you for *The Queen's Wake*. Since I saw you in Edinburgh I have read it. It does Mr. Hogg great credit. Of the tales, I liked best, much the best, *The Witch of Fife*, the former part of *Kilmany*, and the *Abbot Mackinnon*. Mr. Hogg himself, I remember, seemed most partial to *Mary Scott*, though he thought it too long. For my own part, though I always deem the opinion of an able writer upon his own works entitled to consideration, I cannot agree with Mr. Hogg in this preference. The story of *Mary Scott* appears to me extremely improbable, and not skilfully conducted; besides, the style of the

piece is often vicious. The intermediate parts of *The Queen's Wake* are done with much spirit, but the style here, also, is often disfigured with false finery, and in too many places it recalls Mr. Scott to one's mind. Mr. Hogg has too much genius to require that support, however respectable in itself. As to style, if I had an opportunity I should like to converse with you thereupon. Such is your sensibility, and your power of mind, that I am sure I could induce you to abandon many favourite modes of speech; for example, why should you write, "Where the lake gleams beneath the *autumn* sun," instead of "autumnal" — which is surely more natural and harmonious? We say "summer sun," because we have no adjective termination for that season, but "vernal" and "autumnal" are both unexceptionable words. Miss Seward uses "hybernal," and I think it is to be regretted that the word is not familiar. But these discussions render a letter extremely dull.

I sent the alterations of *Yarrow Visited* to Miss Hutchinson and my sister in Wales, who think them great improvements, and are delighted with the poem as it now stands. Second parts, if much inferior to the first, are always disgusting, and as I had succeeded in *Yarrow Unvisited*, I was anxious that there should be no falling off; but that was unavoidable, perhaps, from the subject, as imagination almost always transcends reality. I remain, . . . with great regard and respect, yours most truly,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXII

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 22, 1814.

My dear Sir,

Your account of yourself distresses me. Flee from your present abode. If you resolve on going to London, let me beg of you to take Westmoreland in your way. You can make a trial here, and should it not answer, you are only so far on your way to town. . . .

Your first position, that every idea which passes through a poet's mind may be made passionate, and therefore poetical, I am not sure that I understand. If you mean through a poet's mind when in a poetical mood, the words are nothing but an identical proposition. But a poet must be subject to a thousand thoughts in common with other men, and many of them must, I suppose, be as unsusceptible of alliance with poetic passion as the thoughts that interest ordinary men. But the range of poetic feeling is far wider than is ordinarily supposed, and the furnishing new proofs of this fact is the only incontestible demonstration of genuine poetic genius. Secondly, "The moment a clear idea of any kind is conceived, it ought to be brought out directly, and as rapidly as possible, without a view to any particular style of language." I am not sure that I comprehend your meaning here. Is it that a man's thoughts should be noted down in prose? or that he should express them in any kind of verse that they most easily fall into? I think it well to make brief memoranda of our most interesting thoughts in prose; but to write fragments of verse is an embarrassing practice. A similar course answers well in painting, under the name of

Studies; but in poetry it is apt to betray a writer into awkwardness, and to turn him out of his course for the purpose of lugging on these ready-made pieces by the head and shoulders. Or do you simply mean that such thoughts as arise in the process of composition should be expressed in the first words that offer themselves, as being likely to be most energetic and natural? If so, this is not a rule to be followed without cautious exceptions. My first expressions I often find detestable; and it is frequently true of second words, as of second thoughts, that they are the best. I entirely accord with you in your third observation, that we should be cautious not to waste our lives in dreams of imaginary excellence, for a thousand reasons, and not the least for this, that these notions of excellence may perhaps be erroneous, and then our inability to catch a phantom of no value may prevent us from attempting to seize a precious substance within our reach.

When your letter arrived I was in the act of reading to Mrs. Wordsworth your *Exile*, which pleased me more, I think, than anything that I have read of yours. There is, indeed, something of "mystification" about it, which does not enhance its value with me; but it is, I think, in many passages delightfully conceived and expressed. I was particularly charmed with the seventeenth stanza, first part. This is a passage which I shall often repeat to myself; and I assure you that, with the exception of Burns and Cowper, there is very little of recent verse, however much it may interest me, that sticks to my memory (I mean which I get by heart). . . .

. . . Mr. Hogg's *Badlew* (I suppose it to be his) I could not get through. There are two pretty passages; the flight of the deer, and the falling of the child from the

rock of Stirling, though both are a little *outré*. But the story is coarsely conceived, and, in my judgment, as coarsely executed; the style barbarous, and the versification harsh and uncouth. Mr. Hogg is too illiterate to write in any measure or style that does not savour of balladism. This is much to be regretted; for he is possessed of no ordinary power.

. . . Do not imagine that my principles lead me to condemn Scott's method of pleasing the public, or that I have not a very high respect for his various talents and extensive attainments. . . . With great respect, I remain yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXIII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[No date.]

My dear Friend,

I don't know that it is quite fair to sit down to answer a letter of friendship the moment it is received, but allow me to do so in this case. . . . To you I will whisper that *The Excursion* has one merit if it has no other, viz. variety of musical effect. Tell Patty Smith this. The name is a secret with me, and would make her stare. Exhort her to study with her fingers till she has learned to confess it to herself. Miss S.'s notion of poetical imagery is probably taken from *The Pleasures of Hope*, or *Gertrude of Wyoming;* see, for instance, stanza first of said poem. There is very little imagery of *that* kind in *The Excursion;* but I am far from subscribing to your concession that there is little imagery in the poem; either collateral, in the way of metaphor coloring the style; illustrative, in

the way of simile; or directly under the shape of description or incident. There is a great deal, though not quite so much as will be found in the other parts of the poem, where the subjects are more lyrically treated, and where there is less narration or description turning upon manners, and those repeated actions which constitute habits, or a course of life. Poetic passion (Dennis has well observed) is of two kinds; imaginative and enthusiastic, and merely human and ordinary. Of the former it is only to be feared that there is too great a proportion. But all this must inevitably be lost upon Miss P. S.

The soul, dear Mrs. Clarkson, may be re-given, when it has been taken away. My own "Solitary" is an instance of this; but a soul that has been dwarfed by a course of bad culture cannot, after a certain age, be expanded into one of even ordinary proportion. Mere error of opinion, mere apprehension of ill consequences from supposed mistaken views on my part, could never have rendered your correspondent blind to the innumerable analogies and types of infinity, or insensible to the countless awakenings to noble aspiration, which I have transfused into that poem from the Bible of the Universe, as it speaks to the ear of the intelligent, and as it lies open to the eyes of the humble-minded.

I have alluded to the lady's errors of opinion. She talks of my being a worshiper of Nature. A passionate expression, uttered incautiously in the poem upon the Wye, has led her into this mistake; she, reading in coldheartedness, and substituting the letter for the spirit. Unless I am greatly mistaken, there is nothing of this kind in *The Excursion*. There is indeed a passage towards the end of the fourth book, where the Wanderer introduces the simile of the Boy and the Shell, that has

something ordinarily (but absurdly) called *Spinosistic.* But the intelligent reader will easily see the *dramatic* propriety of the passage. The Wanderer, in the beginning of the book, had given vent to his own devotional feelings, and announced in some degree his own creed. He is here preparing the way for more distinct conceptions of the Deity, by reminding the Solitary of such religious feelings as cannot but exist in the minds of those who affect atheism. She condemns me for not distinguishing between Nature as the work of God, and God himself. But where does she find this doctrine inculcated? Whence does she gather that the author of *The Excursion* looks upon Nature and God as the same? He does not indeed consider the Supreme Being as bearing the same relation to the Universe, as a watch-maker bears to a watch. In fact, there is nothing in the course of the religious education adopted in this country, and in the use made by us of the Holy Scriptures, that appears to me so injurious as perpetually talking about *making by God.*

Oh! that your correspondent had heard a conversation which I had in bed with my sweet little boy, four and a half years old, upon this subject the other morning. "How did God make me? Where is God? How does he speak? He never spoke to *me.*" I told him that God was a spirit, — that he was not like his flesh, which he could touch; but more like his thoughts, in his mind, which he could not touch. The wind was tossing the fir trees, and the sky and light were dancing about in their dark branches, as seen through the window. Noting these fluctuations, he exclaimed eagerly, "There 's a bit of Him, I see it there!" This is not meant entirely for father's prattle; but for heaven's sake, in your religious talk with children, say as little as possible about *making.*

One of the main objects of *The Recluse* is to reduce the calculating understanding to its proper level among the human faculties.

. . . I have done little or nothing towards your request of furnishing you with arguments to cope with my antagonist. Read the book if it pleases you; the construction of the language is uniformly perspicuous; at least I have taken every possible pains to make it so, therefore you will have no difficulty there. The impediments you may meet with will be of two kinds, such as exist in the *Ode* which concludes my second volume of poems. This poem rests entirely upon two recollections of childhood; one that of a splendour in the objects of sense which is passed away; and the other an indisposition to bend to the law of death, as applying to our own particular case. A reader who has not a vivid recollection of these feelings having existed in his mind in childhood cannot understand that poem. So also with regard to some of those elements of the human soul whose importance is insisted upon in *The Excursion*, and some of those images of sense which are dwelt upon as holding that relation to Immortality and Infinity which I have before alluded to. . . .

1814?

CCLXXIV

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[No date.]

. . . Lamb is justifiably enraged at the spurious review which his friends suspect to be his. No Newmarket jockey, no horse-stealer, was ever able to play a hundredth part of the tricks upon the person of an unhappy beast that the Bavius of the *Quarterly Review* has done. . . .

To talk of the offence of writing *The Excursion* and the difficulty of forgiving the author, is carrying audacity and presumption to a height of which I did not think any *woman* was capable. Had my poem been much coloured by books, as many parts of what I have to write must be, I should have been accused (as Milton has been) of pedantry, and of having a mind which could not support itself but by other men's labours. Do not you perceive that my conversations almost all take place out of doors, and all with grand objects of Nature, surrounding the speakers, for the express purpose of their being alluded to in illustration of the subjects treated of? Much imagery from books would have been an impertinence, and an incumbrance; where it was required, it is found.

As to passion, it is never to be lost sight of that *The Excursion* is *part* of a work; that in its plan it is conversational; and that, if I had introduced stories exciting

curiosity, and filled with violent conflicts of passion and a rapid interchange of striking incidents, these things could have never harmonized with the rest of the work; and all further discourse, comment, or reflections must have been put a stop to. This I write for you, and not for your friend; with whom (if you would take my advice) you will neither converse by letters, nor *vive voce*, upon a subject of which she is in every respect disqualified to treat. Farewell. . . .

W. W.

CCLXXV

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

New Year's Eve.

My dear Friend,

. . . I am encouraged by finding so much of your letter devoted to *The Excursion*. . . . I have neither care nor anxiety, being assured that if it be of God, it must stand; and that if the spirit of truth, "the vision and the faculty divine," be not in it, and do not pervade it, it must perish. So let the wisest and best of the present generation, and of posterity, decide the question. Thoroughly indifferent as I am on this point, I will acknowledge that I have a wish for the *sale* of the present edition, partly to repay the expenses of our Scotch tour; and still more to place the book within reach of those who can neither purchase nor procure it in its present expensive shape. . . . I smiled at your notice of Coleridge reviewing *The Excursion* in the *Ed.*[1] I much doubt whether he has read three pages of the poem; and Jeffrey has already printed off a review, beginning with these elegant and decided words, "This will never do"; the sage critic

[1] *The Edinburgh Review.* — Ed.

then proceeding to shew cause why this precious farce is what the coxcomb's idolators call a *crushing* review. Therefore you see, as the evil spirits are rouzed, it becomes the good ones to stir; or what is to become of the poor poet and his labours?

I will now tell you, by way of chit-chat, the little that I have heard of the reception of the poem. Dr. Parr (who, you recollect, gave a proof of his critical acumen in the affair of Ireland's MSS., which he pronounced to be "genuine Shakespear") has declared that it is all *but* Milton; Dr. Johnson, a leading man of Birmingham, says that there has been nothing equal to it since Milton's day. Mr. Sergeant Bough has spoken to the same effect. The Bishop of London[1] is in raptures; the Duke of Devonshire made it his companion in a late jaunt to Ireland, and was so much delighted that he frequently expressed his sorrow that he missed me in his late visit to Lowther, where I was expected about the same time. All the best readers even in Edinburgh are enchanted with it. This I had from a respected acquaintance who himself purchased three copies. A gentleman of Derby unknown to me pronounces it an admirably fine poem. A lady of Liverpool, a Quaker, breaks through all forms of ceremony to express her gratitude by letter, which she does in most enthusiastic terms. Charles Lamb (I cannot overlook *him*) calls it "the best of books"; and lastly, your son Tom sate up all night reading it. If this won't satisfy you, I could give you a good deal more by rummaging my memory.

By way of *per contra*, I ought to tell you that the renowned poet and critic, Anthony Harrison of facetious

[1] Dr. William Howley. — Ed.

memory, and the whole family of Addison (certain proof that the blood is adulterated, though the name continues to be spelt as formerly), found *The Excursion* not *un peu* but *très pesant.* It was too low in the subjects for their high-flying fancies. Perhaps you may not remember that A. H. selected as a topic for his muse, the Bark House Beck, so called from its collecting into its bosom all the sweets of Jack Hendson's tan-yard. . . .

CCLXXVI

From Dorothy Wordsworth, in the same letter

. . . As to the permanent fate of that poem[1] or of my brother's collected works, I have not the shadow of a doubt. I know that the good, and pure, and noble-minded will in these days, and when we sleep in the grave, be elevated, delighted, and bettered by what he has performed in solitude, for the delight of his own soul, independent of any lofty hope of being of service to his fellow creatures. . . .

[1] *The Excursion.* — Ed.

1815

CCLXXVII

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

RYDAL MOUNT, February 1, 1815.

My dear Sir George,

Accept my thanks for the permission given me to dedicate these poems to you. In addition to a lively pleasure derived from general considerations, I feel a particular satisfaction; for, by inscribing them with your name, I seem to myself in some degree to repay, by an appropriate honour, the great obligation which I owe to one part of the collection — as having been the means of first making us personally known to each other. Upon much of the remainder, also, you have a peculiar claim, — for some of the best pieces were composed under the shade of your own groves, upon the classic ground of Coleorton; where I was animated by the recollection of those illustrious poets of your name and family, who were born in that neighbourhood; and, we may be assured, did not wander with indifference by the dashing stream of Grace Dieu, and among the rocks that diversify the forest of Charnwood. Nor is there any one to whom such parts of this collection as have been inspired or coloured by the beautiful country from which I now address you, could be presented with more propriety than to yourself — who have composed so many admirable

pictures from the suggestions of the same scenery. Early in life the sublimity and beauty of this region excited your admiration; and I know that you are bound to it in mind by a still strengthening attachment.

Wishing and hoping that this work may survive as a lasting memorial of a friendship, which I reckon among the blessings of my life, I have the honour to be, my dear Sir George,

Yours most affectionately and faithfully,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Thomas De Quincey

[Postmark, Feb. 8, 1815.]

My dear Sir,

"When in his character of philosophical poet, having thought of Morality as implying in its essence voluntary obedience, and producing the effect of order, he transfers — in the transport of imagination — the law of moral to physical natures; and, having contemplated, through the medium of that order, all modes of existence as subservient to one Spirit, concludes his address to the power of Duty in the following words:

To humbler functions awful Power."

The above is the quotation.

I have sent to the printer another stanza to be inserted in *Laodamia* after

While tears were thy best pastime day and night;

(not a full stop, as before)

> And while my youthful peers before my eyes
> (Each hero following his peculiar bent)
> Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
> By martial sports — or, seated in the tent,
> Chieftains and things in council were detained;
> What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.
>
> The wish'd-for wind was given: I then revolved our future course,[1] etc.

So, I fear it must be altered from the oracle, lest these words should seem to allude to the other answer of the oracle which commanded the sacrifice of Iphigenia. I wish you had mentioned *why* you desired the *rough* copies of the preface to be kept, as your request has led me to apprehend that something therein might have appeared to you as better or more clearly expressed than in the after draught; and I should have been glad to reinstate accordingly. Pray write to us. We are all well.

CCLXXIX

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 17, 1815.

My dear Sir,

. . . One of my engagements has been the writing of an additional preface and a supplementary essay to my poems. I have ordered Longman to send the book to you as soon as printed. . . . You will find a few hits at certain celebrated names of Scotland — I do not mean persons now living — which may give great offence; yet not much, I think, to you. . . . I confess I much prefer the classical model of Dr. Beattie to the insupportable

[1] See the poem *Laodamia*, l. 122. — Ed.

slovenliness, and neglect of syntax and grammar, by which Hogg's writings are disfigured.

. . . You advert in your notes to certain stores of Highland character, incident, and manners, which have been but slightly touched upon. Would it not be well to collect these as materials for a poetic story, which, if you would set yourself to work in good earnest, I am confident you could execute with effect? Let me recommend this to you, or to compose a romance founded on some one of the many works of this kind that exist, as Wieland has done in his *Oberon;* not that I should advise such a subject as he has chosen. You have an ear, and you have a command of diction, a fluency of style, and I wish, as your friend, that you would engage in some literary labour that would carry you out of yourself, and be the means of delighting the well-judging part of the world. In what I said upon the setting down thoughts in prose, I only meant briefly as memoranda to prevent their being lost. It is unaccountable to me how men could ever proceed, as Racine (and Alfieri I believe) used to do, first writing their plays in prose, and afterwards turning them into verse. It may answer with so slavish a language and so enslaved a taste as the French have, but with us it is not to be thought of.

. . . Let me know if you continue in the mind of trying the effect of Westmoreland air upon your spirits. Mr. Wilson has a charming little cottage at Elleray, which, perhaps, he is not likely to make use of; but this you would find very lonely; and it is several miles distant from us. I fear there would be some difficulty in getting lodgings that would suit you; but the trial must be made. The country is at present charming, the first spring flowers peeping forth in the gardens wonderfully.

I hope that you continue to like *The Excursion*. I hear good news of it from many quarters. But its progress to general notice must be slow.

Have you read Lucien Bonaparte's epic?[1] I attempted it, but gave in at the sixth canto, being pressed for time. I shall, however, resume the labour, if opportunity offers. But the first three stanzas convinced me that the author was no poet. Farewell! Miss Hutchinson is still in Wales. Mrs. Wordsworth begs her best regards.

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXX

William Wordsworth to Thomas Poole

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE,
March 13, 1815.

My dear Poole,

A few days ago I was at Keswick, where I learned that Hartley was to go to Oxford about Easter. Mrs. Coleridge wished me to write to you and mention this, and also that if it were not inconvenient to you, that the £10 which you were so kind as to offer, would be convenient at this time; as she has not the means of fitting him out, and she does not like to apply to his uncles in the first instance. He is to go to Merton College, where his cousins or uncles (I am not sure which) have procured him an office, the title of it Postmaster, which is to bring him in £50 per annum, which with his uncle's £40,

[1] Prince Lucien Bonaparte (1775–1840), brother of Napoleon Bonaparte, published in London an epic entitled *Charlemagne*, two volumes, 1814. — Ed.

Lady B.'s £30, and your £10, it is hoped will maintain him. Cottle also allows £5 per annum; if more be wanted, Southey and I must try to advance it. I have done all in my power to impress upon H.'s mind the necessity of not trusting vaguely to his talents, and to an irregular sort of knowledge, however considerable it may be in some particulars; and of applying himself zealously and perseveringly to those studies which the University points out to him. His prime object ought to be to gain an independence; and I have striven to place this truth before his understanding in the clearest point of view; and I took the opportunity of speaking to him on the subject in the presence of his uncle Southey, who confirmed and enforced all that I said. So that if good advice have any virtue in it, he has not been left unfurnished with it. Southey means to look out for a place in some public office for Derwent; he hopes to succeed in the Exchequer where the situations are very good. Sara has made great progress in Italian under her mother; and is learning French and Latin. She is also instructed in music by Miss Barker, a friend of Southey's, who is their near neighbour; so that should it be *necessary* she will be well fitted to become a governess in a nobleman's or gentleman's family, in course of time; she is remarkably clever, and her musical teacher says that her progress is truly astonishing. Her health unfortunately is but delicate.

It was my intention to write to you if Mrs. C. had not requested it, and I am happy to give this account of our friend's children, who are all very promising. Nevertheless, I have some fears for Hartley, as he is too much inclined to the eccentric. But it is our *duty* to hope for the best. Coleridge, we have learnt, is still with the

Morgans, but removed from the neighbourhood of Bath to Colne or Caln in Wiltshire. His friends in this country hear nothing from him directly. A sister of my wife's, who was staying at Bath, walked over to call upon him, but found the family removed. His late landlady was very communicative, and said that Mr. C. used to talk with her of his children, and mentioned that his eldest was going to college. So that you see he expects the thing to take place, though he wished to put it off when you conversed with him on the subject. I rejoice to hear of your thriving school. I have not yet seen your relation's pamphlet which you recommend; I have heard it praised by others, and shall procure it.

If you have read my poem, *The Excursion*, you will there see what importance I attach to the Madras system.[1] Next to the art of printing it is the noblest invention for the improvement of the human species. Our population in this neighbourhood is not sufficient to apply it on a large scale; but great benefit has been derived from it even upon a small one. If you *have* read my poem, I should like to have a record of your feelings during the perusal, and your opinion afterwards; if it has not deeply interested you, I should fear that I had missed my aim in some important particulars. I had the hope of pleasing you in my mind during the composition in many parts, especially those in which I have alluded to the influence of the manufacturing spirit; and in the pictures, in the last book but one, which I have given of boys in different

[1] So called from Dr. Andrew Bell (1793–1832), who was chaplain and teacher at Madras. Owing to the want of assistant masters, he invented a method of mutual instruction by the pupils; and on his return to England organized the educational system of pupil-teachers. — Ed.

situations in life, the boy of the manufacturer, of the yeoman, and the clergyman's and gentleman's son. If you can conscientiously recommend this expensive work to any of your wealthier friends, I will thank you, as I wish to have it printed in a cheaper form, for those who cannot afford to buy it in its present shape. And as it is in some places a little abstruse, and in all serious, without any of the modern attractions of glittering style, or incident to provoke curiosity, it cannot be expected to make its way without difficulty, and it is therefore especially incumbent on those who value it to exert themselves in its behalf. My opinion as to the execution of the minor parts of my works is not in the *least altered.* My poems are upon the point of being republished, in two volumes octavo, with a new preface and several additions, though not any pieces of length. I should like to present you with a copy as a testimony of my regard, if you would let me know where you wish to have it sent; or if you could call, or desire anybody to call, for it at Longmans. Pray give me your notions upon the Corn Laws, what restricted price you think high enough. Some one seems indispensable.

Most faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXXI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

16th March, [1815.]

My dear Friend,

. . . William had an interesting letter last night from the "ingenuous poet" of Derby[1] whom he quotes in the

[1] John Edwards, author of *The Patriot Soldier* (1784), *Kathleen* (1808), *Abradates and Panthea* (1808), etc. — Ed.

Essay on Epitaphs. I will give you an extract from his letter. He says: "I could not comply with your injunction not to purchase *The Excursion*, etc., etc. I would not now be without the book for twice its value." He goes on to say that he had had a letter from his friend Montgomery, the poet,[1] from which he quotes as follows: "The poem in my opinion — an opinion confirmed by repeated perusals of it — is incomparably the greatest and the most beautiful work of the present age of poetry; and sets Mr. W. beyond controversy above all the living, and almost all the dead, of his fraternity.

I assure you that the spirit of that book, which I read first at Scarborough in September, so possessed me that I have scarcely yet recovered my relish for any other modern verse. The peculiar harmony of rhythm, felicity of language, and splendour of thought for a while made all poor or feeble in comparison. I am gradually returning to sober feelings, etc., etc."

This passage I think will interest you. Montgomery was the author of[2] *The Eclectic Review*, but though he there speaks with profound respect and admiration, and though he shews (which nobody else in the way of criticism has done) that he is deeply sensible of the *labour* and *skill* with which the poem has been wrought up, he does not speak with the same *feeling* as in this private letter, probably because in the *Review* he wrote under another hand. . . .

[1] James Montgomery, author of *The Wanderers in Switzerland*, etc. (1806), *The World before the Flood*, etc. (1813). — Ed.

[2] She probably meant "of the article in *The Eclectic Review*." — Ed.

CCLXXXII

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, April 25, 1815.[1]

My dear Sir,

I think of starting for London in a few days, with Mrs. Wordsworth, and as I wish to leave home with as clear a conscience as I can, I sit down to atone for one of my offences in not having replied sooner to your kind letter. . . .

You ought to have received my two volumes of poems long before this, if Longman had done his duty. I ordered a copy likewise to be sent to Walter Scott. I cannot but flatter myself that this publication will interest you. The pains which I have bestowed on the composition can never be known but to myself, and I am very sorry to find, on reviewing the work, that the labour has been able to do so little for it. You mentioned *Guy Mannering* in your last. I have read it. I cannot say that I was disappointed, for there is very considerable talent displayed in the performance, and much of that sort of knowledge with which the author's mind is so richly stored. But the adventures I think not well chosen, or invented; and they are still worse put together; and the characters, with the exception of Meg Merrilies, excite little interest. In the management of this lady the author has shown very considerable ability, but with that want of taste which is universal among modern novels of the Radcliffe school; which, as far as they are concerned, this is. I allude to the laborious manner in which everything is placed before

[1] So it is dated in Gillies' book; but Wordsworth was then in London. The month was probably March. The mistake may be either Wordsworth's or Gillies'. — Ed.

your eyes for the production of picturesque effect. The reader, in good narration, feels that pictures rise up before his sight, and pass away from it unostentatiously, succeeding each other. But when they are fixed upon an easel for the express purpose of being admired, the judicious are apt to take offence, and even to turn sulky at the exhibitor's officiousness. But these novels are likely to be much overrated on their first appearance, and will afterwards be as much undervalued. *Waverley* heightened my opinion of Scott's talents very considerably, and if *Mannering* has not added much, it has not taken much away. Infinitely the best part of *Waverley* is the pictures of Highland manners at Mac Iver's castle, and the delineation of his character, which are done with great spirit. The Scotch baron, and all the circumstances in which he is exhibited, are too peculiar and *outré*. Such caricatures require a higher condiment of humour to give them a relish, than the author of *Waverley* possesses. . . .

Excuse this dull and hasty letter, and believe me,

Most sincerely yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

KENDAL, May 3d, Friday Morning, [1815.][1]

My dear Montagu,

You will be perplexed by receiving three letters from me. One was sent from Rydal yesterday, another in the

[1] This letter was written on a half sheet of thin post paper, without water mark ; the other sheet, containing the "memorandum," having doubtless been detached by Basil Montagu. The date is fixed by the mention of Dorothy's age (44). It was written in 1815. — Ed.

shape of a parcel this morning from Kendal, under an expectation, which I find is erroneous, that it would be delivered to you on Sunday. Since that letter was written I have consulted an intelligent attorney here, and from him I learn that the bond will be of no use to me for either principal or interest (without an expensive process in chancery), till Richard's son is of age, if Richard die without a will providing for the payment. I therefore beg you, as a friend and a man of business acting as my *representative*, to state to my brother that, under the present circumstances, it is my duty to enforce upon him the necessity of making and executing a will by which his estates shall be charged with the payment, within a year after his decease, of whatever sum shall be found due from him to his sister and myself, from the estate of our father, or otherwise. I sincerely beg of you to see that this is done immediately. My brother and I examined the accounts together, and agreed upon everything relating to this, according to the memorandum attached to this, so that there can be no difficulty on this part of the subject. I shall be most anxious till I hear from you that this is done; for do think of my poor sister's situation at present, forty-four years of age, and without the command of either principal or interest of her little property, in case Richard has not provided otherwise. I will now repeat my thanks for your goodness to Richard. You hint that a sale should have been made. It seems as if there was reason to apprehend that dilatoriness may still interfere. Surely Richard will be sensible of what he owes to his own family, and to his father's. Farewell,

Affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXXIV

William Wordsworth to John Scott

24 Edward Street, Cavendish Square,
May 14, 1815.

Sir,

. . . During the earlier stages of the French Revolution I resided upwards of twelve months in France, and have since had some opportunities of studying the character of that people : and the impressions then made upon my mind place it out of my power to doubt whether the unfavourable picture which you draw of what they have now become be unfavourable.

Thanking you for the pleasure and instruction which I have received from your *Visit to Paris*, I remain, with great respect,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXXV

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[Postmark, KENDAL, 1815.]
28th June, Wednesday.

My dear Friend,

. . . Upon the Ambleside coach this morning was affixed a paper "Great News. Abdication of Buonaparte," but no particulars. Now I do not like the word *abdication*. What right has he to abdicate, or to have a word to say in the business? I am only afraid that the armies have stopped too soon, as they did before. A few hours will explain all, but I confess I dare not hope that matters

will not be again mismanaged. The particulars of the battle of the 18th are dreadful. The joy of victory is indeed an awful thing, and I had no patience with the tinkling of our Ambleside bells upon the occasion; nor with the Prince Regent's message, dictated as he says by "serious consideration," recommending that further proofs of the munificence of the people should be shewn to the Duke of Wellington. It is perfectly childish to be in such a bustle while even his own family ought to have been *at least* paying the tribute of respectful tears to the memory of the gallant Duke of Brunswick.

Eleven o'clock. Before I go to bed I must tell you that, saving grief for the lamentable loss of so many brave men, I have read the newspapers of to-night with unmingled triumph; and now I wait anxiously for Friday's post, to know how our armies will proceed. So the abdication was made to his own people! That is as it should be; and I hope he is now a safe prisoner, somewhere. . . .

CCLXXXVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[Postmark, KINGTON.]
November 11th, [1815.]

. . . He [William] wrote to me from Lowther Castle on the 4th, and intended to return to Rydal on the 7th. He was unlucky in not arriving at L. a few days earlier, as the Duke of Devonshire had been there, and expressed a great desire to see him. He had just returned from Ireland, where he had made *The Excursion* the companion of his tour, and had been greatly pleased with it. I say he was unfortunate, because his enemies will be busy

enough in the reviews, and elsewhere, and it is really of no little importance to us that the work should sell, and for another reason. He intends publishing *The White Doe* in the spring, and the scene of that poem is Bolton Abbey, the favourite (and much-admired by him) property of the Duke of Devonshire. Perhaps you may not guess, for I have but half explained myself, why I am sorry that William did not see the Duke, on account of the sale of *The Excursion.*

. . . I saw two sections of Hazlitt's review at Rydal, and did not think them nearly so well written as I should have expected from him, though he praised *more* than I should have expected. His opinion that all the characters are one character I cannot but think utterly false. There seems to *me* to be an astonishing difference, considering that the primary elements are the same, fine talents and strong imagination. He says that the narratives are a clog upon the poem. I was not sorry to hear it, for I am sure that with common readers those parts of the poem will be by far the most interesting.

CCLXXXVII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

RYDAL MOUNT, November 25th, 1815.

My dear Friend,

. . . Luff[1] was a genuine lover of his country, and a true and enlightened friend of mankind. On this account I think it right that his surviving friends should not

[1] A Patterdale friend of the Wordsworth's and the Clarkson's. See Dorothy Wordsworth's "Mountain Ramble" (1805) in the second volume of her *Journals*, p. 15, etc. — Ed.

suffer him to pass out of the world, without a notice or record of his worth, which may stand a chance of being generally perused. The main difficulty lies in finding out a channel for things of this kind. A notice in a newspaper must be short; and those in the obituaries of magazines are I fear little read, there being no magazine existing which appears to be in general circulation. What is your opinion of the best way of doing this? . . .

CCLXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,
December 21st, 1815.

. . . I was much hurt to learn that you still suffer much from weakness of sight, and continue to be impeded in your labours by the same cause. Why did you not tell me what progress you had made in your grand picture, and how you are satisfied with your performance? I am not surprised to hear that Canova expressed himself highly pleased with the Elgin Marbles; a man must be senseless as a clod, or as perverse as a fiend, not to be enraptured with them. . . .

Now for the poems, which are sonnets; one composed the evening I received your letter, the other the next day, and the third the day following; I shall not transcribe them in the order in which they were written, but inversely.

The last you will find was occasioned, I might say inspired, by your last letter, if there be any inspiration in it; the second records a feeling incited in me by the object it describes in the month of October last, and the

first by a still earlier sensation which the revolution of the year impressed me with last autumn.

[The three sonnets are then transcribed, viz.:]

I

While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields, etc.

II

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright, etc.

III

High is our calling, Friend! Creative Art, etc.

I wish the things had been better worthy of your acceptance, and of the careful preservation with which you will be inclined to honour this little effusion of my regard.

With high respect, I am, my dear sir,

Most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCLXXXIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

23d December, [1815.]

My dear Friend,

. . . In weather precisely of this kind, except that the snow did not then lie *thick* upon the ground, on the shortest day of the year sixteen years ago, did William and I at five o'clock in the evening enter our cottage at Grasmere. We found no preparations except beds, without

curtains, in the rooms upstairs, and a dying spark in the grate of the gloomy parlour. Your entrance upon your new house is not like this. . . .

William and I set forward upon a like journey, to make the preparations necessary for a final settlement with Richard. The weather was frosty without snow, and I never in my youngest days, in the summer season, had a more delightful excursion; except for the intervention of melancholy recollections of persons gone, never to return. We set off at one o'clock, walked over Kirkstone, and reached Patterdale by daylight; slept there, and rose early the next morning, determined to walk to Hallsteads (Mr. Marshall's new house, built upon Skelly Nab) before breakfast. The lake was calm as a mirror, the rising sun tinged with pink light the snow-topped mountains, and we agreed that all we saw in the grander parts of the scene was more beautiful even than in summer. At Hallsteads we breakfasted, and rested till twelve o'clock. I parted from William at Red Hills. He went to Sockbridge, and I proceeded to Penrith, where I arrived at a little before three o'clock, without the least fatigue. . . . My dear friend, have I not reason to be thankful that my strength is thus continued to me, and that my pleasure in walking remains as keen as ever. . . .

CCXC

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Sunday, the last day of the old year, [1815.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . William and I were at Sockbridge. I have given you the history of our journey in my letter to Playford. We were favoured in weather for a whole week, and performed the entire journey except about six miles on foot, to our infinite satisfaction, pacing side by side along the shores of Ullswater, as we did years ago, when your hospitable dwelling was the bourne to which we tended. . . .

1816

CCXCI

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

Rydal Mount,
Thanksgiving Day, January, 1816.

My dear Wrangham,

You have given an additional mark of that friendly disposition, and those affectionate feelings which I have long known you to possess, by writing to me after my long and unjustifiable silence. But as I have told you (though I don't remember in these words), I was not born with a pen in my mouth, nor in my hands or toes. I am painfully conscious how poor a genius I possess for epistolary communications; and if I had any native flow of this kind, my miserable penmanship would at once check it. How can such matters, and in such a garb, be worth anybody's acceptance? This is the interrogation which now and always stares me in the face when I would converse with my friends by means of paper and ink. Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid, but presumptuous indeed should I be if I were not assured that such letters as my pen makes are excepted. Neither Cupid, nor Minerva, nor Phœbus, nor Mercury, nor any of the pagan gods who presided over liberal and kindly inventions, deign to shed their influence over my endeavours in this field. But may the goddess of patience support

you; while you attempt in friendship to read, what I am now preparing for the perplexity of your understanding, and the annoyance of your eyesight.

Unluckily I have neither seen nor heard of your translation from Virgil. You have done well to amuse yourself in this way; but the employment must have been somewhat too difficult for mere pastime. The Eclogues of Virgil appear to me, in that in which he was most excellent, polish of style and harmony of numbers, the most happily finished of all his performances. I know that I shall be much gratified by your translation when it finds its way to me, which I hope it will do soon.

Of *The White Doe* I have little to say, but that I hope it will be acceptable to the intelligent, for whom alone it is written. It starts from a high point of imagination, and comes round through various wanderings of that faculty to a still higher; nothing less than the apotheosis of the animal, who gives the first of the two titles to the poem. And as the poem thus begins and ends with pure and lofty imagination, every motive and impulse that actuates the persons introduced is from the same source. A kindred spirit pervades, and is intended to harmonize, the whole. Throughout, objects (the banner, for instance) derive their influence not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects. Thus the poetry, if there be any in the work, proceeds whence it ought to do, from the soul of man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world.

But too much of this. I am happy to hear that your family prospers, and that your children are to your mind.

In my own I find much to regret, and something to complain of; faults most of which have probably been created by my own mismanagement. I am, however, truly and deeply thankful to God for what he has left me. Do not imagine, dear Wrangham, that though I am a bad correspondent, I therefore forget either you or my other early friends. Farewell. I am always glad to hear of you.

Most faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCXCII

William Wordsworth to John Scott[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,
February 22, 1816.

My dear Sir,

Your *Paris Revisited* has been in constant use since I received it — a very welcome sight it was. . . . Nothing in your works has charmed us more than the lively manner in which the painting of everything that passes before your eyes is executed. Every one of your words *tells;* and this is an art which few travellers, at least of our days, are masters of. Your estimate of Buonaparte's character is, I think, perfectly just. . . . I wish that I could think as favourably as you do of the Duke of Wellington. Since his first début in Portugal I have watched his course as carefully as my opportunities allowed me to do; and notwithstanding the splendour of those actions at the head of which he has been placed, I am convinced that there is no magnanimity in his nature. You have

[1] Editor of *The Champion.* — Ed.

laudably availed yourself of the temptation to contrast his mode of proceeding with Buonaparte's; and undoubtedly he appears to great advantage opposed to that audacious charlatan and remorseless desperado. But depend upon it, the constitution of his mind is not generous, nor will he pass with posterity for a hero. One would desire that in all cases the personal dignity of the prime agents should correspond with that of important actions; but this rarely happens in human affairs either military or civil; and I have found nothing more mortifying in the course of my life than those peeps behind the curtain, that have shown me how low in point of moral elevation stand some of those men who have been the most efficient instruments and machines for public benefit that our age has produced. We live in inquisitive times, and there is but too little reserve in gratifying public curiosity. Happy will it be for this distinguished leader, and I will add for his country, if his name be a gainer from the communications which his character and actions will give birth to! I fear that upon the whole it will be otherwise; and I express this fear to you, who from the best motives have so ably defended and panegyrized him, with strong regret; but sincerity requires it.[1] . . .

This personal question is the only material point in your books in which I differ from you. I approve of all that you have said upon the subject of the removal of the works of art from Paris. The Emperor of Russia was the main cause of their being left in French possession by the first peace. His is a Frenchified intellect — to that degree that it was not without much difficulty he gave his consent, on the first occupation of Paris, to the

[1] Wordsworth's unfavourable estimate of "the Great Duke" was modified in after years. — Ed.

King of Prussia removing his own cannon which he found there. The calamities of these times, as far as they were occasioned by the domination of the French, have been mainly owing to this, that they . . . never ventured upon an entire reliance on those rules of justice which were alone competent to save them. Had they been capable of this elevation of mind, a moment's reflection would have shown them that they had no right to confirm to the French the possession of these articles without the free unbiased consent of the original owners; that they were not lawful conquests but infamous plunder; and the allies by taking upon themselves to concede these things to the robbers, acted not less unjustly, whatever were their motives, than the original despoiler. . . . It is the duty of an English Opposition to be rigorously hostile to the Ministry, but never let their endeavours to accomplish the downfall of their political antagonists excite in them a favourable aspiration for the enemies of their country. The Opposition party were unable to discern that a time of war and a time of peace required very different modes of proceeding on their part; that a style of hostility, which would have been laudable in the one, became detestable in the other. Through the whole course of the late war the party out of power blushed not to behave as if they had been retained by Buonaparte for his advocates. This was unsupportably revolting to all true-hearted Englishmen, who were not actively engaged in the contest, and could therefore see clearly and feel naturally. . . . I will only add a word on Spanish affairs. The Cortes were what Lord Castlereay describes them, and worse. They thirsted after the independence of their country, and many of them nobly laboured to effect it; but, as to civil liberty and religious institutions, their

notions were as wild as the most headstrong Jacobins of France. Their plan was to erect an Iberian Republic — and they were pushing matters desperately to that extremity. Think of a Republic in Spain — what horror to go through before such a thing could be brought about; and what worse than horrors would have attended its rapid destruction! Farewell.

Most faithfully and respectfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCXCIII

William Wordsworth to John Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 25th, [1816.]

My dear Sir,

Most readily would I undertake the office which you propose to me, but for a reason which I am sure you will think sufficient for my declining it for a short while at least. I am myself engaged with an attempt to express in verse some feelings connected with these very subjects;[1] and, till that engagement is over, neither in justice to you or to myself can I introduce into my own mind such a stream as I have no doubt your poem will be felt to be. . . . My short essays, for there are two pieces,[1] cannot possibly interfere with your work, as they stand at a distance from the body of the subject, which I do not doubt will be ably embraced by others. Southey is a fellow-labourer. I have seen but little of his performance, but that little gave me great pleasure. . . .

[1] Doubtless the *Thanksgiving Ode*, and its sequel. — Ed.

. . . I am glad that you have read my tract occasioned by the Convention of Cintra. You must have seen therein what my views were, and are, for in nothing are my *principles* changed. In verse I celebrated the king of Sweden. He proved, I believe, a madman. What matters that? He stood forth as the only royal advocate, at that time, of the only truths by which, if judiciously applied, Europe could be delivered from bondage. I seized on him as an outstanding object in which to embody certain principles of action, which human nature has thousands of times proved herself capable of being governed by. I boldly announced in prose the benefit which Spain would derive from a Cortes, but I was under a considerable mistake as to the degree in which the men who might compose it would be liable to French delusions. But a representative legislature is still in my opinion the best of political blessings when a country has materials fit to compose it. Such had Spain for the purpose of achieving her national independence; and I hope may have, ere long, to establish for herself a frame of civil liberty. The late Cortes were not equal to that task. As to the Duke of Wellington, poetically treated he may pass for a hero; and on that account I less regret what I wrote to you. But to the searching eye of the historian, and still more of the biographer, he will, I apprehend, appear as a man below the circumstances in which he moved. . . .

Farewell. With much regard and increasing respect,

I remain yours,

W. W.

CCXCIV

William Wordsworth to John Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, March 11th, 1816.

My dear Sir,

I wrote to you some little time since giving my reasons why I felt myself obliged to decline the undertaking which you did me the honour of proposing to me. Those reasons no longer exist; and I now write to let you know that having finished all that at present I have any intention of executing in connection with the great events of our time, I shall be happy to comply with your request, if you continue in the same mind.

When I wrote the sonnets inserted in *The Champion*, I had no design of doing anything more. But I could not resist the temptation of giving vent to my feelings as collected in force upon the morning of the day appointed for a general thanksgiving. Accordingly, I threw off a sort of irregular ode upon this subject, which spread to nearly 350 lines; the longest thing of the lyrical kind, I believe, except Spenser's *Epithalamion*, in our language. Out of this have sprung several smaller pieces, — effusions rather than compositions, — though in justice to myself I must say that upon the correction of the style I have bestowed, as I always do, great labour. I hope that my pains in this particular have not been thrown away, and that in their several degrees the things will not be found deficient in spirit. But I do not like to appear as giving encouragement to a lax species of writing, except where the occasion is so great as to justify an aspiration after a state of freedom beyond what a succession of regular stanzas will allow. But, as I before hinted, these smaller

pieces are but offsets of the larger; and their defects in this point may be charged upon their parent, though I shall not call upon the public to be so indulgent. From my country I solicit no mercy. I have laboured intensely to merit its approbation, and in some smaller degree to secure (in future times at least) its gratitude; and for the present I am well contented with my portion of distinction. If I wish for more, I can honestly affirm it is mainly from a belief that it would be an indication that a better taste was spreading, and high and pure feelings becoming more general.

In regard to your own announced adventure upon the sea of poetry, I may truly say that I was most glad to hear of it; because your prose has convinced me that you have a mind fitted to ensure success. Nevertheless my pleasure was not absolutely pure; for if you have not practised metre in youth, I should apprehend that your thoughts would not easily accommodate themselves to those chains, so as to give you a consciousness that you were moving under them and with them, gracefully and with spirit. I question not that you have written with rapidity; nothing is more easy; but in nothing is it more true than in composing verse that the nearest way home is the longest way about. In short I dreaded the labour which you were preparing for yourself. You are a master of prose; and your powers may be so flexible and fertile as to be equal to both exercises, — so much the better! I mean equal to them without injury to your health. But should it appear to me that the specimen you send of your poem requires additional care and exertion, I shall not scruple to tell you so; and with the less reluctance because I am confident that you may attain eminence in English prose which few of late have reached.

That field is at present almost uncultivated; we have adroit living writers in abundance; but impassioned, eloquent, and powerful ones not any, at least that I am acquainted with. Our prose, taking it altogether, is a disgrace to the country. I ought to apologize for putting your patience to the test by these wretched scrawls. But take me as I am. . . . Would you object to see my *Thanksgiving Ode*, etc., before publication? If not, they will be sent you, and I should be grateful for your remarks.

P.S. — I fear what I have said on prose, as now produced, may be misunderstood. Charles Lamb, my friend, writes prose exquisitely; Coleridge also has produced noble passages; so has Southey. But I mean there is no body of philosophical, impassioned, eloquent, finished prose now produced.

Your publisher must have been negligent, for a second copy of your *Paris Revisited*[1] has reached me!

CCXCV

William Wordsworth to John Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, March 21, [1816.]

My dear Sir,

I had packed up my little pieces of verse, intending to send them to you; but on second thoughts, I have forwarded them direct to Longman, knowing that you are so much engaged; and apprehending that you might not possibly be at home, which would have occasioned a delay. I was also desirous that the effect of my verses upon you

[1] *Paris Revisited in 1815, by Way of Brussels; including a Walk over the Field of Waterloo* (1816). He had issued (in 1815) *A Visit to Paris in 1814*. — Ed.

should not be interfered with by a blotted and blurred MSS., and by uncouth characters, irresistibly distracting attention. I shall be not the less anxious for the benefit of your remarks after publication. I have not yet received any MSS. from you. In the same parcel I have sent for publication a letter in prose, to a friend of Burns, the poet, which I hope you will read with some satisfaction.

No doubt you are personally acquainted with Brougham; I have some knowledge of him likewise. Our last interview was terminated among the majestic woods of Lowther, near his own beautiful residence. Thither I would gladly remit him, "inter sylvas academi quaerere *verum*."[1] Mr. B. is not content with scribbling in the *Edinburgh Review* to the praise and glory of the Corsican, but he must insult the people of England by expressing in their House of Legislature, and that of the three kingdoms, his hope that that great man may be *kindly* treated in his insular prison. What is there in the conduct of this government that justifies an apprehension that the claims of *humanity* will not be attended to by it in this case; though if there ever existed one in which those claims might be set aside, it is the present. Be persuaded, my dear sir, that men who in that assembly, or indeed anywhere else, can talk in this manner have no tact, and whatever may be their cleverness, no intellectual sanity. I congratulate you on having expressed in your last *Champion* a decided opinion on this subject. Haydon has done himself credit by his essay on the Elgin Marbles.[2] . . .

[1] Horace, *Epistolae*, Lib. II, ep. ii, l. 45. — Ed.

[2] *The Judgment of Connoisseurs upon Works of Art compared with that of Professional Men, in reference more particularly to the Elgin Marbles* (1816). — Ed.

CCXCVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

4th April, [1816.][1]

My dear Friend,

. . . It grieves me to think how the childhood of these dear children passes away and you see nothing of them. Dorothy is now in her twelfth year, and John will be thirteen years in June. She is lively, affectionate, and quick in faculties; but is often wayward and has fits of obstinacy with pride. Of vanity she has little or none, and is utterly free from envy. She is a fine-looking girl; but at times her face is very plain, at other times it is even beautiful. She is rather stout and tall, but neither in the extreme, holds her head up well, has a broad chest, and good shoulders, but walks and runs most awkwardly.

John is much improved since he went to Mr. Dawes as a boarder, and his father hopes he will be a decent scholar in time. He is a noble, ingenuous-looking boy, and is thoroughly sweet-tempered, beloved by all his schoolfellows, and respected by them for his integrity. Little Willy (I am glad to give him that title, for it makes me sad sometimes when I think how we are losing the others as children) is a very sweet and interesting child; a happy mixture of tenderness and infantine simplicity, with liveliness, ardent curiosity, and great quickness. He is backward at his books, for he has only just begun to learn at all; but he is now under a new master, his father's clerk, and his progress is very rapid. All at once under him he became steady, whereas his mother, his aunt Sarah, and I, have all by turns undertaken him, and we could

[1] The year can be fixed from the children's ages. — Ed.

make nothing out. The lesson was the signal for yawning, and for perpetual motion in one part of the body or another. . . .

CCXCVII

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, April 9, 1816.

My dear Sir,

. . . Mr. De Quincey has taken a fit of solitude; I have scarcely seen him since Mr. Wilson left us. You are very obliging in having taken so much trouble about so slight a thing as the sonnet of mine you sent me. It is not worth while to tell you by what circuitous channel it found its way into *The Examiner*, a journal which I never see, though I have great respect for the talent of its editor. In *The Champion*, another weekly journal, have appeared not long since five sonnets of mine, all of which are much superior to the one which you have sent me. They will form part of a publication which I sent to the press three weeks ago, which you have been given to understand was a long work, but it is in fact very short, not more than seven hundred verses altogether. The principal poem is three hundred lines long, a *Thanksgiving Ode*, and the others refer almost exclusively to recent public events. The whole may be regarded as a sequel to the sonnets dedicated to liberty, and accordingly I have given directions for its being printed uniform with my poems to admit of its being bound up also with them. I have also sent to press a letter in prose, occasioned by an intended republication of Dr. Currie's *Life of Burns*. When these little things will be permitted to see the light

I know not; and as the publisher has not even condescended to acknowledge the receipt of the manuscripts, which were sent three weeks ago, you may judge from this of the value which the goods of the author of *The Excursion* at present bear, in the estimation of the trade. *N'importe;* if we have done well, we shall not miss our reward. Farewell!

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCXCVIII

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, April 15, 1816.

. . . Gray failed as a poet, not because he took too much pains, and so extinguished his animation, but because he had very little of that fiery quality to begin with, and his pains were of the wrong sort. He wrote English verses as his brother Eton schoolboys wrote Latin, filching a phrase now from one author and now from another. I do not profess to be a person of very various reading; nevertheless, if I were to pluck out of Gray's tail all the feathers which I know belong to other birds, he would be left very bare indeed. Do not let anybody persuade you that any quantity of good verses can be produced by mere felicity; or that an immortal style can be the growth of mere genius. "Multa tulit fecitque"[1] must be the motto of all those who are to last. There are poems now existing which all the world ran after at their first appearance, and it will continue to run after their like, that do not deserve to be thought of as literary works; everything in

[1] Horace, *De Arte Poetica*, l. 413. — Ed.

them being merely skin-deep as to thought and feeling, the juncture or suture of the composition not being a jot more cunning or more fitted for endurance than the first fastening together of fig-leaves in Paradise. But I need not press upon you the necessity of labour, as you have avowed your conviction upon this subject. . . . Pray remember me to the Wilsons most kindly. When does Mr. Wilson return to Westmoreland? I have not yet seen his *City of the Plague;* the more the pity, for I quarrel with the title. Tell Mr. Wilson this from me, and repeat the two following quotations:

> But whate'er enjoyments dwell
> In the impenetrable cell
> Of the silent heart which Nature
> Furnishes for every creature;

and this —

> Cock-a-doodle doo,
> My dame has lost her shoe;
> My master 's lost his fiddle-stick,
> And knows not what to do!

Farewell,

With great regard and esteem, yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCXCIX

William Wordsworth to John Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, Thursday, April 18th, 1816.

My dear Sir,

. . . With very deep concern did I read your account of Mrs. Scott. . . . I know not in what situation this letter may find you; but if your prospects have brightened, which I pray God they may have done, it will not

be indifferent to you to be told that these lines are traced by the hand of one who will rejoice in your joy; and if sorrow is to be your portion, be assured that under this roof there is more than one heart that will feel for you in a degree which is rare, where personal intercourse unfortunately has been so inconsiderable. . . .

There is such a striking coincidence between your opinions and mine, as to all the fundamentals of politics and morals, that I do not think it possible that there can really be much difference between us upon the point of the merits of the Opposition. The nation is interested in this question under two points of view. How are they likely to demean themselves while *out* of place, and, what good would they do if *in?* For my own part, supposing the latter event to happen, — which I do not think by any means to be desired, — I own that my chief reliance would be, not upon their wisdom, but on the salutary restraint which a change of situation would impose upon their opinions, and in the favourable alteration which would be wrought in their passions by the kindly moulding of new circumstances. . . . Suppose the Opposition as a body, or take them in classes, and let your imagination carry them in procession through Westminster Hall, and thence let them pass into the adjoining Abbey, and give them credit for feeling the utmost and best that they are capable of feeling in connection with these venerable and sacred places, and say frankly whether you would be at all satisfied with the result. Imagine them to be looking from a green hill over a rich landscape, diversified with spires and church towers and hamlets, and all the happy images of English landscape, would they have becoming reverence of the English character? and do they value as they ought — and even as their opponents

do — the constitution of the country, in Church and State. . . . But I must stop. Let me only say one word upon Lord B. The man is insane; and will probably end his career in a mad-house. . . . The verses on his private affairs excite in me less indignation than pity. The latter copy is the Billingsgate of Bedlam. . . . "Sine dementia nullus Phœbus"; but what a difference between the *amabilis insania* of inspiration, and the fiend-like exasperation of these wretched productions. It avails nothing to attempt to heap up indignation upon the heads of those whose talents are extolled in the same breath. The true way of dealing with these men is to shew that they want genuine power; that talents they have, but that these talents are of a mean order; and that their productions have no solid basis to rest upon. Allow them to be men of high genius, and they have gained their point and will go on triumphing. Demonstrate them to be what in truth they are — in all essentials, dunces — and I will not say that you will reform them; but, by abating their pride, you will strip their wickedness of the principal charm in their own eyes. . . .

Affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCC

William Wordsworth to Robert Southey

Friday, RYDAL MOUNT.

My dear Friend,

Miss Hutchinson informs us that both you and Mrs. Southey support yourselves under your loss[1] with admirable fortitude. I need not say what a consolation it is

[1] Southey's son Herbert died on the 17th of April, 1816. — Ed.

to me to learn this. You will indeed stand in need of resignation and patience, and all the passive virtues. These will not desert you, because in your mind they will be supported by faith and hope, without whose assistance I think it utterly impossible for a good man of a tender heart to bear up under an affliction so heavy as yours.

Whether I look back or forward I sorrow for you, but I doubt not that in time your retrospective thoughts will be converted into sweet though sad pleasures ; and, as to your prospective regards in connection with this dear child, as they will never stop short of another and a more stable world, before them your disappointments will melt away ; but they will make themselves felt, as they ought to do, since it will be for a salutary purpose. . . . Farewell ; and the God of mercy and love sustain you, and your partner. Most faithfully and affectionately,

Your friend and fellow sufferer,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCI

William Wordsworth to John Scott

May 14, [1816.]

My dear Sir,

. . . Some years ago I wrote at length upon the subject of the military and civil character to Colonel Pasley, author of the *Essay on the Military Policy of this Island.* . . . *Scientific* military establishments, upon a scale proportioned to the necessary size of our army, are, I think, indispensable in the present state of Europe. To say nothing of the plea of humanity, nothing of national

reputation for military efficiency, the state of the *finances* of the country will not allow us time, in a future war, if one should break out, to re-acquire the degree of military skill which can alone ensure success, if we should suffer our present knowledge to languish for want of due care in keeping it up. Poverty would compel us to give in long before we had accomplished anything important for the relief of the party whose interest we had espoused. Unquestionably, if the inevitable consequence of keeping up those institutions is to be the impairing of our civil energy, let them perish. But I cannot see that this need follow. . . .

CCCII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[Postmark, KENDAL.]
Sunday, 26th May, [1816.]

My dear Friend,

. . . Sara Coleridge is much improved in health and strength, and is much grown. She is a delightful scholar, having so much pleasure in learning. I know no greater pleasure than to instruct a girl who is so eager in the pursuit of knowledge as she is. Often do we wish that Dorothy was like her in this respect, half like her would do very well; for with all Dorothy's idleness, there are many parts of her character which are much more interesting than corresponding ones in Sara; therefore, as good and evil are always mixed up together, we should be very contented with a moderate share of industry, her talents being quite enough. But I am perhaps misleading you. I have no fault to find with Sara in anything; but yet there is a something, which made me make the observation — a want of power to interest you — not from anything

positively amiss, but she wants the wild graces of nature. Edith [1] is a delightful girl — scholar good enough — and to me very engaging. I hope you got my brother's *Odes, etc.*, the *Letter on Burns*. All are gone to church, but me. . . .

CCCIII

William Wordsworth to John Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, Tuesday, June 11, [1816.]

My dear Sir,

I am only just returned after more than a week's absence upon painful and anxious business, which has devolved upon me as trustee under the will of my eldest brother, recently deceased. He has left an only child, a boy sixteen months old, and a widow not twenty-seven years, and though his property is considerable, yet the affairs are in an intricate and perplexed situation, so that much of my time and more of my thoughts will in future be taken up by them; and I need scarcely say to you that I am wholly inexperienced in things of this kind. But to return to your situation and prospects. My best wishes will follow you to the Continent, and I shall be anxious to hear that your hopes keep their ground and strength from the influence of a milder climate. I have no doubt that the world will be benefited by your observations abroad; yet in a public point of view I cannot but regret your departure from your own country. It would give me pleasure could I say that I have any acquaintances in the literary world, through whom I could hope to aid you in disposing of *The Champion*. It will be very difficult, I fear impossible, to place the work

[1] Edith Southey. — Ed.

in such hands as would support its present reputation, after you have resigned the management of it; and therefore I cannot but think you judge well and prudently in being desirous to *sell* the property, rather than entrust it to an editor or partner during your absence. But I have not a single acquaintance except Southey, to whom it would be advisable even to make known your intentions; for there is a disadvantage, as well as an advantage, in publicity upon occasions of this sort. . . . The queries you put to me upon the connection between genius and irregularity of conduct may probably induce me to take up the subject again, and yet it scarcely seems necessary. No man can claim indulgence for his transgressions on the score of his sensibilities, but at the expense of his credit for intellectual powers. All men of *first* rate genius have been as distinguished for dignity, beauty, and propriety of moral conduct. But we often find the faculties and qualities of the mind not well balanced; something of prime importance is left short, and hence confusion and disorder. On the one hand it is well that dunces should not arrogate to themselves a pharisaical superiority, because they avoid the vices and faults which they see men of talent fall into. They should not be permitted to believe that they have more understanding merely on that account, but should be taught that they are preserved probably by having less feeling, and being consequently less liable to temptation. On the other hand, the man of genius ought to know that the cause of his vices is, in fact, his deficiencies, and not, as he fondly imagines, his superfluities and superiorities. All men ought to be judged with charity and forbearance after death has put it out of their power to explain the motives of their actions, and especially men of acute sensibility

and lively passions. This was the scope of my letter to Mr. Gray.[1] Burns has been cruelly used, both dead and alive. The treatment which Butler and others have experienced has been renewed in him. He asked for bread — no, he did not *ask* it, he endured the want of it with silent fortitude — and ye gave him a stone. It is worse than ridiculous to see the people of Dumfries coming forward with their pompous mausoleum, they who persecuted and reviled him with such low-minded malignity. Burns might have said to that town when he was dying, "Ingrata — non possidebis ossa mea!"[2] On this and a thousand other accounts his monument ought to have been placed in or near to Edinburgh; "stately Edinburgh throned on crags."[3] How well would such an edifice have accorded with the pastoral imagery near St. Anthony's Well and under Arthur's Seat, while the metropolis of his native country, — to which his writings have done so great honour — with its murmuring sounds, was in distinct hearing! . . .

I must not conclude without a word upon politics. . . . I will not at present recur to our military disagreement, further than to repeat the expression of my own belief, that no danger to the civil liberties of the country — in the present state of public information, and with our present means of circulating truth — is to be apprehended from such scientific military establishments as appear to be eligible. And surely you will allow that martial qualities are the natural efflorescence of a healthy

[1] See *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns* (1816). — Ed.

[2] Scipio Africanus (234–183 B.C.) ordered these words to be carved on his tomb in Campania; and Luis de Camoens, the Portuguese poet, on leaving his native country, is credited with having said, "Ingrata patria, non possidebis ossa mea." — Ed.

[3] See *The Excursion*, Book IV, l. 913. — Ed.

state of society. All great politicians seem to have been of this opinion; in modern times Machiavel, Lord Brooke, Sir Philip Sydney, Lord Bacon, Harrington, and lastly Milton, whose tractate of education[1] never loses sight of the means of making man perfect, both for contemplation and action, for civil and military duties. But you are persuaded that if you take care of our civil privileges, they will generate all that can be needed of warlike excellence; and here only we differ. My opinion is that much of immediate fitness for warlike exploit may co-exist with a perfect security of our rights as citizens. Nay, I will go farther, and affirm that tendencies to degradation in our national chivalry may be counteracted by the existence of those capabilities for war in time of peace. But this point I do not wish to press. War we shall have, and I fear shortly — and alas! we are little fit to undertake it. At present there is nothing relating to politics, on which I should so much like to converse with you, as the conduct which it is desirable that the king of France should pursue. The French nation is less fitted than any other to be governed by moderation. Nothing but heat and passion will have any sway with them. Things must pass with them, as they did with us, in the first and second Charles's time, from one extreme to the other. Something to this effect is thrown out in a late number of *The Courier;* and I confess I have myself been long of that opinion. The reforming Royalists in Charles the First's time vanished before the Presbyterians, they before the Independents, they before the Army, and the Army before Cromwell; then things ran to the opposite extreme, with a force not to be resisted. Louis the Eighteenth stands as the successor of Cromwell,

[1] *Of Education, to Master Samuel Hartlib.* — Ed.

and not like our Revolution William. The throne of a James-the-Second Louis cannot I fear stand, but by the support of the passions of an active portion of his subjects ; and how can such passions be generated but by deviation into what a moderate man would call ultra-royalist. Justice in the settlement of affairs has been cruelly disappointed, and this feeling it is which gives strength and a seeming reasonableness to these passions. The compromises *once* were intolerable. . . .

CCCIV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE, August 2d, 1816.

My dear Sir,

It gave me much pleasure to see your friend Mr. Cargill, though I am sorry to say that his looks and appearance were so much altered by delicate not to say bad health that I did not at first recollect him. In fact he had found himself so far untuned on his arrival at Kendal as to deem it advisable to halt there for two days ; and in consequence of this consumption of his time he could only spare one day for this neighbourhood, being anxious to reach Edinburgh as quickly as possible. I need not say that I found his manners and conversation answer the promises of your introductory letter, and that I parted from him with regret, which was not a little increased by an impression upon my mind that rest would have been a better thing for him than Edinburgh bustle, or a fatiguing and harassing journey among the bad and widely-parted inns of the Highlands.

The hope of seeing you here is very grateful to me ; and upon a supposition that you propose to take some

pains in seeing the country I will proceed to give you directions for doing it to the best advantage. From London to Manchester, thence to Lancaster (the castle is extremely well worth your notice). At this town, instead of proceeding by the coach to Kendal, enquire about the best mode of crossing the sands to Ulverston; a coach used to go, but whether it runs now or not, I cannot say. Of course you must take care to cross these sands at a proper time, or you will run a risk of being drowned, a catastrophe to which I would not willingly be instrumental. At Ulverston you will be within seven or eight miles of the celebrated abbey of St. Mary's, commonly called Furness abbey. These ruins are very striking, and in an appropriate situation. If you should think it worth while to go and see Furness, the best way would be for you and your friend to hire a chaise, as by so doing you would preserve your strength, and need only consume three hours in the expedition.

Should you not deem this right (for you would have to go and come back by the same way), you will proceed straight from Ulverston to Coniston Water, by Penny Bridge where there is a decent inn; and at the head of Coniston Lake a very good one, delightfully situated. If so inclined, you might pass a whole day very pleasantly there; the morning rowing upon the water, the afternoon walking up and through Yew-dale into Tilberthwaite, by a house called the Yew-tree, and up a road which will land you near another farm-house called Tarn-Haws. At a point in this road you will suddenly come upon a fine prospect of Coniston Lake, looking down it. From Coniston to Hawkshead. At Hawkshead walk up into the churchyard, and notice below you the school-house, which has sent forth many northern lights, and among others your humble servant.

From Hawkshead proceed to the ferry-house upon Windermere, and less than a quarter of a mile before you reach it, stop, and put yourself under the guidance of an old woman, who will come out to meet you if you sing or call for her at a fantastic sort of gateway, an appurtenance to a pleasure-house of that celebrated patriot Mr. Curwen, called the Station. The Ferry inn is very respectable, and that at Bowness excellent. Cross at the ferry, and proceed by Bowness up the lake towards Ambleside. You will pass Low-wood, an excellent inn also, but here you would be within four miles of Rydal Mount, where I shall be most happy to see you and furnish you with a bed as long as you like; but I am sorry to say it will not be in my power to accommodate your friend, who nevertheless shall be welcome for your sake. Hence you will hear from this direction I shall do everything in my power to be at home when you come; but many engagements have devolved upon me in consequence of the lamented death of my brother,[1] and some I fear are too likely to press upon me about the time of your intended visit.

The road I have chalked out is much the best for commencing the tour, but few take it. The usual way is to come on directly to Kendal, but I can assure you that this deviation from the common course will amply repay you.

I am glad that you were pleased with my verses. They were poured out with much feeling, but from mismanagement of myself the labour of making some verbal corrections cost me more health and strength than anything of that sort I ever did before. I have written nothing since. As to publishing, I shall give it up, as nobody will buy what I send forth; nor can I expect it,

[1] His brother Richard, attorney-at-law, died May 19, 1816. — Ed.

seeing what stuff the public appetite is set upon. As to your advice about *To a Ruin*, that subject we will talk of when we meet. My whole soul was with those who were resolved to fight it out with Buonaparte; and my heart of hearts set against those who had so little confidence in the power of justice as to be ready at any moment to accept of such a truce, as under the name of peace he might condescend to bestow. For the personal character of the present ministry, with the exception of Lord Harrowby, I cannot say to you that I have any high respect, but I do conscientiously believe that they have not been wanting in efforts to economize, and that the blame of unnecessary expenditure rests with the Prince Regent. Adieu.

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

The ladies under my roof have you in best regards and remembrance.

My brother desires me to add that . . . halting at Coniston, and the deviations from the common track, must depend upon the length of time which you have to spare. I shall be very glad to see you again.

D. W.

CCCV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[Postmark, KENDAL.]
Tuesday, 15th August, 1816.

My dear Friend,

. . . We shall never grow rich; for I now perceive clearly that till my dear brother is laid in his grave, his writings will not produce any profit. This I now care

nothing about, and shall never more trouble my head concerning the sale of them. I once thought *The White Doe* might have helped off the others; but I now perceive it can hardly help itself. It is a pity it was published in so expensive a form, because some are thereby deprived of the pleasure of reading it; but however cheap his poems might be, I am sure that it will be very long before they have an extensive sale. Nay, it will not be while he is alive to know it. God be thanked, William has no mortification on this head, and I may safely say that those who are most nearly connected with him have not an atom of that species of disappointment. We have too rooted a confidence in the purity of his intentions and the power with which they are executed. His writings will live, will comfort the afflicted, and animate the happy to purer happiness; when we, and our little cares, are all forgotten.[1] . . .

CCCVI

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 16, 1816.

My dear Sir,

. . . If you write more blank verse, pray pay particular attention to your versification, especially as to the pauses on the first, second, third, eighth, and ninth syllables. These pauses should never be introduced for convenience, and not often for the sake of variety merely, but for some especial effect of harmony or emphasis. . . .

I remain, with great respect, most truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

[1] Compare Wordsworth's letter to Lady Beaumont, May 21, 1807. — Ed.

CCCVII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[1816?]

. . . My verses have all risen up of their own accord. I was once requested to write an inscription for a monument which a friend proposed to erect in his garden, and a year elapsed before I could accomplish it.[1] . . .

[1] Wordsworth wrote four "inscriptions" for the grounds of his friend Sir George Beaumont of Coleorton. They were entitled (1) *In the grounds of Coleorton, the seat of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., Leicestershire;* (2) *In a garden of the same;* (3) *Written at the request of Sir George Beaumont, Bart., and in his name, for an urn, placed by him at the termination of a newly-planted avenue, in the same grounds;* (4) *For a seat in the Groves of Coleorton.* It is to the third that he refers in the above letter. It was composed in 1808. He spent the winter of 1806–7 at Coleorton farm-house. See the Eversley edition of his poems, Vol. IV, pp. 74–82. — Ed.

1817

CCCVIII

William Wordsworth to Daniel Stuart

RYDAL MOUNT, April 7, 1817.

My dear Sir,

. . . I am, like you, an alarmist, and for this reason. I see clearly that the principal ties which kept the different classes of society in a vital and harmonious dependence upon each other have, within these thirty years, either been greatly impaired or wholly dissolved. Everything has been put up to market and sold for the highest price it would buy. Farmers used formerly to be attached to their landlords, and labourers to their farmers who employed them. All that kind of feeling has vanished. In like manner, the connexion between the trading and landed interests of country towns undergoes no modification whatever from personal feeling, whereas within my memory it was almost wholly governed by it. A country squire, or substantial yeoman, used formerly to resort to the same shops which his father had frequented before him, and nothing but a serious injury, real or supposed, would have appeared to him a justification for breaking up a connexion which was attended with substantial amity and interchanges of hospitality from generation to generation. All this moral cement is dissolved; habits and prejudices are broken and rooted up, nothing being

substituted in their place but a quickened self-interest, with more extensive views and wider dependencies, but more lax in proportion as they are wider. The ministry will do well if they keep things quiet for the present, but if our present constitution in church and state is to last, it must rest as heretofore upon a moral basis; and they who govern the country must be something superior to mere financiers and political economists. Farewell.

Very faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Sunday, April 13th, 1817.

My dear Friend,

. . . To-day he (William) has composed a sonnet; and in our inner minds we sing "Oh! be joyful!" It has indeed been most melancholy to see him bowed down by oppressive cares, which have fallen upon him through mismanagement, dilatoriness, or negligence. Alas! that is the truth. Nothing can exceed the apathy which our poor deceased brother[1] must have lived in, nor his irresolution and weakness. Southey is going upon the Continent, and William has had a strong desire to go with him; but he has now given it up; for there are certain points pending in Richard's affairs, which might remain longer unsettled, if he were absent. I wish he could have gone. . . . I believe he will go next year, if we live and are well. What do you think of your friend William Smith's

[1] Richard Wordsworth. — Ed.

attack upon Southey?[1] The publishing of the pamphlet was an infamous thing; but neither that, nor the triumphs of the malignant, can do him harm. If I were in Southey's place, I would be far more afraid of my injudicious defenders than my open enemies. Coleridge, for instance, has taken up the cudgels; and of injudicious defenders he is surely the master leader. If you do not see *The Courier* regularly, I hope you may be able to borrow those for the last four or five weeks, and you will see what Coleridge has written. He does nothing in simplicity, and his praise is to me quite disgusting, — his praise of the "man" Southey in contradistinction to the "boy" who wrote "Wat Tyler." I am very glad that Southey is going abroad. He works so hard, and looks so delicate, that one cannot see him without anxious thoughts; and, resolute as he is, he will for ever feel his bitter loss. It comes on him keenly at times. . . .

CCCX

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers[2]

RYDAL MOUNT, May 13, 1817.

. . . I presume you are in a state of earthly existence, as I have heard nothing to the contrary since we parted

[1] Mr. William Smith, liberal M.P. for Norwich, published in 1817 a poem which Southey had written in his young manhood, twenty-three years before, and which had passed into other hands, and been forgotten by its author. This poem, "Wat Tyler," — written when Southey was a youthful republican, — was now published without his knowledge, and the author represented as a renegade, and worse. Southey, for once in his life, condescended to reply to his calumniator, in *A Letter to William Smith, Esq.*; while Coleridge defended his friend in *The Courier*. — Ed.

[2] See *The Early Life of Samuel Rogers* (1887), and *Rogers and His Contemporaries* (1889), by P. W. Clayden. — Ed.

in a shower near the turnpike gate of Keswick. Need I add that I hope and wish that you may be well? In the former part of this sentence you may have divined there lurks a charitable reproach; for you left me with some reason to expect that I should hear of, from, or about you. Though this favour has not been granted, I am not discouraged from asking another, the exact amount of which I am unable to calculate. A friend of mine, a near relation of Mrs. Wordsworth, is smitten with a desire of seeing the pictures brought together by the members of the British Institution, and exhibited in the evening. I feel I have expressed my meaning cumbrously and ill. He greatly wishes to attend in the evening and has applied to me to procure him a ticket, for one night, if I conveniently can. Is it in your power to enable me to gratify this laudable ambition in a worthy person? Having come to the point, I have only to add that his address is, Thomas Monkhouse, Esq., 28 St. Anne's Street; and could you enclose him a ticket, I shall be most thankful.

Are we to see you among us this summer? I hope so — and also that Sharp[1] will not desert us. How is he in health, and what does he say of Switzerland and Italy, both in themselves, and as compared with the scenes in our neighbourhood, which he knows so well? Is George Philips as great an orator as ever, and do you and Dante continue as intimate as heretofore? He used to avenge himself upon his enemies by placing them in h—ll, a thing bards seem very fond of attempting in this day, — witness the laureate's mode of treating Mr. W. Smith.[2] You keep out of these scrapes, I suppose. Why don't

[1] Richard Sharp, "Conversation Sharp," as he used to be called by his friends. — Ed.

[2] See text and note at page 98. — Ed.

you hire somebody to abuse you? and the higher the place selected for the purpose the better. For myself, I begin to fear that I should soon be forgotten, if it were not for my enemies. Yet, now and then, a humble admirer presents himself, in some cases following up his introduction with a petition. The other day I had a letter of this sort from a poetical, not a personal, friend — a Quaker of the name of Barton[1] living at Woodbridge, in Suffolk. He has beguiled me of a guinea, the promise of one at least, by way of subscription to a quarto volume of poems, which he is anxious to print, partly for honour, partly for profit. He solicits my interest to promote his views. I state the fact; I do not beg. I have not sufficient grounds to go upon. I leave the affair to the decision of your own mind, only do not contemn me for abusing. . . .

CCCXI

William Wordsworth to Daniel Stuart

RYDAL MOUNT, June 22, 1817.

My dear Sir,

. . . Your lot is now cast in a fair land, and both yourself and your posterity will, I trust, feel the benefit. Your purchase, which is at a right distance from the metropolis, is, both as to quantity and quality, I think, very judicious. In everything, especially in land, it is of consequence to have good stuff in little room. Buying a large tract of inferior soil, or waste, with a view to reclaim

[1] Bernard Barton (1784–1849), the Quaker poet, and a special friend of Charles Lamb, published in 1818 *The Convict's Appeal* and *Poems by an Amateur*, and in 1822 *Verses on the Death of P. B. Shelley*. — Ed.

it, though flattering to the fancy, is an expedient which within the last few years has ruined persons with more certainty than any other sort of speculation. . . .

There is a maxim laid down in my tract on the Convention of Cintra which ought never to be lost sight of. It is expressed, I believe, nearly in the following words: "There is, in fact, an unconquerable tendency in all power, save that of knowledge, acting by and through knowledge, to *injure the mind* of him by whom that power is exercised." . . .

If I had access to a cabinet minister, I would put these questions. Do you think that the fear of the law, and mere selfish or personal calculations as to profit or loss, in the matter of property or condition, are sufficient to keep a numerous people in due subordination? "No." What loss has the country sustained, within these last twenty or thirty years, of those habits, sentiments, and dispositions, which lend a collateral support, in the way of buttresses, of equal importance for the preservation of the edifice with the foundation itself? If the old props have been shaken or destroyed, have adequate new ones been substituted? A discerning answer to these queries would be the picture of danger, and nothing else can lead to a just consideration of the means by which it is to be lessened. Farewell. . . .

Best regards to Mrs. Stuart, and believe me,

Faithfully yours, W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCXII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, June 24, 1817.

My dear Sir,

Dr. Chalmers, of whom, notwithstanding his celebrity, I had never heard (which occasioned me to address him by the name of Dr. Campbell, a most unlucky blunder), delivered your letter; and I gave him meet directions for seeing this country, as best suited with the time at his disposal. His friend mentioned by you was not with him. I duly received your former letter, I mean in due course of post; for as to other *obligation*, if I may use so bold a word, it came like a bad debt, unexpectedly recovered! (A man of business is speaking to a lawyer; you will therefore excuse the metaphor.)

How came you to quarrel with Furness Abbey? Your old enemy, bad weather, must have persecuted you into bad humour, which — powerful as your foe is — I think he would find some difficulty in effecting. Furness Abbey presents some grand points of view, which you must have missed. The architecture never seems to have been so highly embellished as might have been expected from the princely power and revenues of the community which erected it. This I allow, and it is dilapidated far beyond the point where entireness may advantageously be seen, wherein the gratifications of the eye and the imagination meet each in their utmost perfection. But after all why not be thankful for what has been done, and yet remains? How unlucky you were! We have had less rain during the last eleven or twelve weeks than the average of as many hours taken for the time you were

among us. It has been a cold spring, but bright and beautiful; and we are now in the old golden glorious summer days; the little corn that we have in the neighborhood, and the grass, growing as fast as in Russia or Finland. Yesterday Mrs. Wordsworth and myself were on the top of Helvellyn, my second visit within these last three weeks. The former was with my sister; we returned over its summit from Patterdale where we had been staying a few days. I describe nothing of their appearances in prose. You will hear of them at some future time in verse.

In a fortnight or three weeks I visit Mr. Stanley of Ponsonby, a mile from Calder Abbey, your favourite. I have invited Mr. Hutton to meet me at Ravenglass, and be assured the place shall receive a few ill names from me (on your behalf) if it does not make amends for past offences by putting on its best looks.

I hope you will see Mr. Southey on his return, for news of which I am beginning to look and indeed to long. He went away with a wish to purchase the house he occupies at Keswick. It is advertised for sale on the tenth, I believe, of next month. His letter, quoad Mr. Wm. Smith,[1] is I think completely to the point; but I am not satisfied with his statement of his own opinions and his delineation of the course which he wishes to be pursued. It is too hastily executed, and wants some passages of searching admonition to ministers, both for their benefit, and to blunt the force of a charge which his enemies will bring against the author, of being too obsequious to the throne, the aristocracy, and persons in office or in place; the charge of being a *tool of power*,

[1] See page 98. — Ed.

a most false and foul accusation, for a more disinterested and honourable man than Robert Southey does not breathe. Does Mr. Smith expect that even his personal and party friends will in their conscience believe true whatever they may profess, when he states, as he did in the that he did not censure a change of view but the virulence with which they were now reproached who continue to think as their present preacher himself had formerly done. How came he then to use the word "renegade"? The practice, to which he pretends his censure was confined, is far from entering of necessity into the meaning of that word. The *act of change* is stigmatized by the word, which comes from a deserter of Christianity for Mohammedanism, which Christians cannot admit a possibility of, from other than a bad motive, or a vicious impulse. Farewell. . . .

CCCXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

June 24, 1817.

. . . I have not seen Southey's article in the last Q. R.,[1] nor Mr. Moore's ugly named poem,[2] nor Lord B.'s tragedy,[3] nor his last canto of *Childe Harold*, where I am told he has been poaching on my manor, nor any one new thing whatever, except a bust of myself. Some kind person — which persons mostly unknown to me are — has been good enough to forward me this. Truly yours,

W. W.

[1] *Quarterly Review.* — Ed.
[2] Doubtless *Lalla Rookh.* — Ed.
[3] Probably *Manfred.* — Ed.

CCCXIV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

Wednesday, 25th June.

. . . When on our way home I viewed from the top of Helvellyn the fields of Shelly Nab, and the dwellings of Hallsteads, and the old church. We viewed the masses of snow with particular attention, which —— daily watches in their decay from the shores of Ullswater, and my brother made a bold push to procure some of that very snow for our refreshment; but he could not accomplish it. . . . I never walked with more spirit in my life than on the lofty terraces of Helvellyn. . . . How do you like this very hot weather? It is of the right old-fashioned kind, and pleases me well. I hope that before the very fine weather is gone, you may be all enjoying the luxury of floating upon still waters in long summer evenings. Nothing can exceed the glory of Ullswater at such a time. There is now a refreshing breeze, and, if it continues, we intend to stroll down the meadows to Windermere, and shall take a boat to Low-wood, for the sake of the sunset in the Langdale mountains, — a spectacle I have often heard you speak of with delight. . . .

CCCXV

William Wordsworth to Daniel Stuart

Rydal Mount, Saturday, September 7, 1817.

Dear Sir,

. . . I am decisively of opinion that a public school is the proper place of education for a *lawyer*. I know

several eminent English lawyers distinguished for their knowledge of law, as ——, who most probably would have been equally distinguished for their happy manner of displaying it in a court of justice, if they had fortunately been educated in public schools, but, not having had that discipline, they are obliged to keep their candle hidden under a bushel. Shyness, reserve, awkwardness, want of self-possession, embarrassment, encumbered expression, hesitation in speaking, etc., etc., are sad impediments to an advocate; and the best way of obviating all this is to place a lad under the necessity of encountering the shock he will every moment meet with, in those seminaries. . . . What then do I advise? That your *protégé* should be immediately examined, in Latin and Greek, by some competent person who has been himself distinguished at one of the universities, for his knowledge of classics, and educated at one of the public schools; and, if he find him well grounded and practised in construing and composition, and deems him so far advanced that he can be sent to one of our great public schools with a prospect of benefiting in those studies, that is, without its being probable that he would be thrown back materially by the necessity of learning a new set of syntax rules, or other things of that sort, that then he should proceed forthwith to such schools for the ensuing year, and be admitted at Trinity College, Cambridge, next commencement to reside in October following. I advise Cambridge in preference to Oxford, because at Cambridge he will have stronger incitements and inducements to apply to mathematics; and, if he is able to fix his attention so far as to make a progress in those sciences, the assiduity and steady application of the thoughts requisite for success in law will not be more than he will find himself already prepared

for. I recommend Trinity College in preference to any other, because it is a more liberal foundation. . . .

I remain very truly yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCXVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Rydal Mount, October 16th, [1817.]

My dear Friend,

. . . Derwent Coleridge is going to his father, in London. I cannot see any good that can possibly arise from this, unless it forces his father to exert himself to put the boy forward, or forces him to confess openly that he cannot do anything; which will at least compel him to perceive that he and his children have had and have friends, ill as he thinks he has been used in the world. . . . William has sat for his picture,[1] written a few small poems, entertained company, enjoyed the country, and paid some visits, and so his summer has been passed. He intends to work hard at *The Recluse* in winter. . . .

CCCXVII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

1817.

. . . Sir George and Lady Beaumont returned from Hallsteads, inexpressibly delighted with the hospitality and kindness which they had met with under your roof. They were never weary of talking of the kindness of one

[1] The portrait by Richard Carruthers. — Ed.

and all. . . . All the Wilberforces intend to leave Rydal to-morrow. There never lived on earth, I am sure, a man of sweeter temper than Mr. Wilberforce. He is made up of benevolence and loving-kindness; and, though shattered in constitution, and feeble in body, he is as lively and animated as in the days of his youth.[1] His children very much resemble him in ardour and liveliness of mind. . . .

CCCXVIII

William Wordsworth to R. P. Gillies

RYDAL MOUNT [date wanting], 1817.

My dear Sir,

I am unworthy of the many acts of kind attention you bestow on me. I know nothing of the treatise of Wieland, which you inquired after, or I should have written immediately on receipt of your letter. . . .

But how could you write, "at every step the scenery seemed improving"? This is a thoroughly bad verse; bad even for prose. . . . Your essay is desultory enough. Of the soundness of the opinions it becomes me not to judge. The famous passage on solitude, which you quote from Lord Byron,[2] does not deserve the notice which has been bestowed on it. As composition it is bad, particularly the line,

Minions of grandeur shrinking from distress

[1] The Wordsworths ascended Scawfell on this occasion with the Beaumonts and Wilberforces. — Ed.

[2] The line occurs in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto II, stanza xxvi, l. 5. — Ed.

is foisted in for the sake of the rhyme. But the sentiment by being expressed in an antithetic manner is taken out of the region of high and imaginative feeling to be placed in that of point and epigram. To illustrate my meaning, and for no other purpose, I refer to my own lines on the Wye, where you will find the same sentiment not formally put as it is here, but ejaculated, as it were, fortuitously in the musical succession of preconceived feeling. Compare the paragraph ending

> How often has my spirit turned to thee,

and the one where occur the lines

> And greetings where no kindness is, and all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life,

with these lines of Lord Byron, and you will perceive the difference. You will give me credit for writing for the sake of truth, and not for so disgusting a motive as self-commendation at the expense of a man of genius. . . .

Most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

1818

CCCXIX

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

January 3d, 1818.

. . . If property, situation in life, character, etc., could ensure success, our triumph would be complete. But every man of weight overrates his own importance till it is fairly tried; and this even seems as much owing to want of reflection as to personal vanity. Our indolence bribes us also into a belief that ordinary influences are equal to extraordinary occasions; and we trust accordingly to passive qualities and circumstances, when every nerve ought to be strained and every power put into action. But this, of which I see instances on every side of me, would be better said to the public. . . .

CCCXX

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

Jan. 21, 1818.

. . . What else but the stability and might of a large estate, with proportional influence in the House of Commons, can counterbalance the democratic activity of the wealthy, commercial, and manufacturing districts? It appears to a superficial observer, warm from contemplating

the theory of the Constitution, that the political power of the great landholders ought, by every true lover of his country, to be strenuously resisted; but I would ask a well-intentioned native of Westmoreland or Cumberland, who had fallen into this mistake, if he could point to any arrangement by which Jacobinism can be frustrated except by the existence of large estates continued from generation to generation in particular families, and parliamentary power in proportion.

CCCXXI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

10th Feb., 1818.

. . . Not to exclude or give offence to dissenters, who are very powerful in Kendal, I recommended "King and Constitution," in preference to "Church and King," as the latter part of the Lowther motto. . . .

CCCXXII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

12th Feb., 1818.

This week I have addressed two letters, signed "A Friend to Truth," to the editor of *The Chronicle*, which if he inserts, I shall have some hope of him. If he does not, I shall publish them elsewhere.

. . . I wish much for your opinion as to the propriety of precautionary measures in augmenting the numbers of trustworthy freeholders. An offer has been made to me of an estate which would divide into *twelve* small

freeholds; and, with your Lordship's sanction, I would purchase it, being able to reckon on as many persons, — gentlemen, my friends and relations, — who could be depended upon. If it be found that your adversaries adopt the plan of increasing the numbers in their interest, it will be necessary to keep pace with them, and I don't think that the matter can be safely left to casualties. . . .

CCCXXIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Thomas Monkhouse

KENDAL, March 3d, 1818.

My dear Friend,

Knowing that you do not grudge a shilling that pays for tidings of old friends, and that if you can get a little sound good-government doctrine into the bargain, you will think the shilling well bestowed, I send you this paper;[1] which I think you will say is pretty well done. There is nothing comes out on the other side of the question worth reading, though every day brings out something fresh on both sides. The Broughamites evidently abate in their hopes, and the opposite party has *well grounded* hopes of success; but the misguided mob, including almost all of the lower classes who have no votes, cry aloud for Brougham, expecting that if he is but returned for Westmoreland, meal will be reduced to fifteen shillings a load. So they cry out! and no lady would venture to appear in a yellow ribband in Kendal streets, though you cannot walk thirty yards without meeting a

[1] This letter was written on a copy of the broad-sheet, *To the Freeholders of Westmoreland*, by a freeholder, February 28, 1818. — Ed.

dirty lad or lass with a blue one![1] and the *ladies* of that party also have no fear of displaying their colour.

I am detained at Kendal by bad weather. I came in the coach on Thursday, and shall return upon Neddy to-morrow, if the day be fine. All are well at home. We often wish you had a vote to bring you down at the election. H. Brougham is expected about Easter, when it is much to be feared that there will be fresh disturbances.

I am called to dinner, so excuse this scrawl, and if you put this paper into any one's hands, pray erase all my scrawling. God bless you!

Ever your affectionate, D. W.

I should have sent you the last Kendal paper, but it contained nothing but the London tavern dinner and some villainous writing in which there was no sense, on the other side.

CCCXXIV

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

March 10, 1818.

. . . The rural stamina of this outbreak are misguided good intention, party spirit, dissent, disaffection, envy, pride, and all the self-conceited pretensions which absurd ignorance can be incited to by headstrong reformers and revolutionists. . . .

[1] The respective Tory and Whig colours. — Ed.

CCCXXV

William Wordsworth to Daniel Stuart

RYDAL MOUNT, March, 1818.

Dear Sir,

. . . The sum of my opinion is that, if I had strong reasons for believing my son would apply to the law, I should send him to college at seventeen. If I thought he must be obliged to take up with the Church, I should not send him till nineteen, unless I knew that he was so far advanced in his studies as to encourage a strong persuasion in me that he would distinguish himself, even if sent at seventeen. As to his college, the advantages of a large college are, that he may *choose* his company, and is more likely to be roused by emulation; and the public lectures are more likely to be good, and everything carried forward with more spirit. The disadvantages are that, seeing so many clever men and able scholars, he may be disheartened, and throw up in disgust or despair. Also, much more distinction is required to obtain a fellowship among so many competitors. But it very often happens that distinguished men educated in large colleges, when there are not fellowships for them there, are elected into *small colleges*, which happen to be destitute of persons properly qualified. The chief advantages in a small college are the much greater likelihood of procuring rooms, and, in the end, college patronage; but there is danger of getting into lounging ways from being *forced* among idle people, and the public lectures are rarely carried on with such spirit. . . . But there cannot be a doubt but that the noblest field for an ambitious, industrious, properly qualified, and clever youth is Trinity College. . . .

Ever yours,

W. W.

CCCXXVI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, April 6, 1818.

[He refers to the pamphlet he had written, — the *Two Addresses to the Freeholders in Westmoreland*,[1] — and asks Lord Lonsdale's opinion as to whether it could be put into general circulation.] My object in writing this work was to give the *rationale* of the question, for the consideration of the upper ranks of society, in language of appropriate dignity. It shall be followed up with brief essays, in plain and popular language, illustrating the principles in detail, for the understanding of the lower orders.

CCCXXVII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, October 6, 1818.

. . . I have ascertained that the paper containing that infamous letter signed "Birch" has been sent to different persons of the Lowther party. This is a vile course. Two rules *we* ought to lay down; never to retort by attacking private character, and never to notice the *particulars* of a personal calumny, or any allegation of a personal nature proceeding from an anonymous quarter. We ought to content ourselves by protesting in the strongest terms against the practice, and pointing it out to indignation and contempt. . . .

[1] It was printed at Kendal by King and Bellingham in 1818. — Ed.

CCCXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

28th November, 1818.

Looking at this subject generally, I cannot but be of opinion that the feudal power yet surviving in England is eminently serviceable in counteracting the popular tendency to reform, which would unavoidably lead to peculations. The people are already powerful far beyond the increase of their information, and their improvement in morals. . . .

CCCXXIX

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

Dec. 8th, 1818.

. . . Our opponents are very active in procuring freeholds, so much so that we must exert ourselves with the view of preserving the balance. This necessity is much to be regretted, — but it to me is so obvious that I purchased the other day a freehold estate in Langdale, which will divide into seven parts. Of these five are already disposed of, one to Mr. Gee, and the other four to my own relations. . . .

1819

CCCXXX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Tuesday, 12th January, [1819.]

. . . I resolved to put off writing till to-morrow, when I recollected that to-morrow I am engaged to go with a party of young ones to visit Betty Yewdale in Langdale, the good woman recorded in *The Excursion*, who received the pedlar in her cottage and walked backwards and forwards with her light upon the hill to direct her husband's homeward steps from the quarry.[1] . . .

Mrs. Coleridge is here, with Sara and Edith, — two sweet girls, — and you may be sure we have mirth and merriment enough, with such jinglings of the pianoforte as would tire any but very patient people. We had a grand ball last Thursday. The house turned inside out. Ball-room decorated with evergreens, a happy employment with hard labour for the girls. Two whole mornings were so engaged, and who should come in unexpectedly but Dr. Bell! The lasses' friend, he was detained for the ball, and only left us yesterday. He tutored Miss Dowling, carried his girls with D. to form a class, visited the trinket shop, spent four guineas for them, and left every one a guinea at parting! . . . Hartley has done excellently at Oxford, has had high compliments from his

[1] See *The Excursion*, Book V, ll. 728–771. — Ed.

tutor, is now with his father, writes thoughtfully, resolves to do his utmost on the beaten road, has got the promise of two pupils. We have great hopes that Derwent will get to one of the universities; but it is not yet so far settled that I can say anything further than that Grosvenor Lloyd has offered to allow him £30 per annum out of his living. This is noble and affecting, and his mother rejoices at it. She, poor woman, is at Birmingham struggling with law-suits and family quarrels, — her husband at Ambleside in a wretched state. . . . William has written some beautiful sonnets lately. That is all he has done. . . .

CCCXXXI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

January 13th, 1819.[1]

. . . I wish I could add that I feel myself properly qualified for the undertaking, and that I could get rid of those apprehensions, which they who know me better than I know myself are perpetually forcing upon me, — viz. that my literary exertions will suffer more than I am aware of from this engagement. They ground their opinion upon an infirmity of which I am conscious, viz., that whatever pursuit I direct my attention to is apt to occupy my mind too exclusively. But . . . I am anxious to discharge my obligations to society. . . .

[1] Wordsworth's name had been placed on the list of the Commissioners of the Peace for Westmoreland. — Ed.

CCCXXXII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

Feb. 5, 1819.

. . . We seem pretty much of opinion upon the subject of rhyme. Pentameters, where the sense has a close of some sort at every two lines, may be rendered in regularly closed couplets ; but hexameters (especially the Virgilian, that run the lines into each other for a great length) cannot. I have long been persuaded that Milton formed his blank verse upon the model of the *Georgics* and the *Æneid*, and I am so much struck with this resemblance that I should have attempted Virgil in blank verse, had I not been persuaded that no ancient author can be with advantage so rendered. Their religion, their warfare, their course of action and feeling are too remote from modern interest to allow it. We require every possible help and attraction of sound, in our language, to smooth the way for the admission of things so remote from our present concerns. My own notion of translation is that it cannot be too literal, provided three faults be avoided : first, *baldness*, in which I include all that takes from dignity ; second, *strangeness*, or *uncouthness*, including harshness ; third, attempts to convey meanings which, as they cannot be given but by languid circumlocutions, cannot in fact be said to be given at all. I will trouble you with an instance in which I fear this fault exists. Virgil, describing Æneas's voyage, third book, verse 551, says,

> Hinc sinus Herculei, si vera est fama, Tarenti
> Cernitur.

I render it thus:

> Hence we behold the bay that bears the name
> Of proud Tarentum, proud to share the fame
> Of Hercules, though by a dubious claim.

I was unable to get the meaning with tolerable harmony into fewer words, which are more than to a modern reader, perhaps, it is worth.

I feel much at a loss, without the assistance of the marks which I have requested, to take an exact measure of your lordship's feelings with regard to the diction. To save you the trouble of reference, I will transcribe two passages from Dryden, — first the celebrated appearance of Hector's ghost to Æneas. Æneas thus addresses him:

> O light of Trojans and support of Troy,
> Thy father's champion, and thy country's joy,
> O long expected by thy friends, from whence
> Art thou returned, so late for our defence?
>
> Do we behold thee, wearied as we are
> With length of labours and with toils of war?
> After so many funerals of thy own,
> Art thou restored to thy declining town?

This I think not an unfavourable specimen of Dryden's way of treating the solemnly pathetic passages. Yet surely there is *nothing* of the *cadence* of the original, and little of its spirit. The second verse is not in the original, and ought not to have been in Dryden; for it anticipates the beautiful hemistich,

> Sat patriæ Priamoque datum.

By the by, there is the same sort of anticipation in a spirited and harmonious couplet preceding :

> Such as he was when by *Pelides slain*
> Thessalian coursers dragged him o'er the plain.

This introduction of Pelides here is not in Virgil, because it would have prevented the effect of

> Redit exuvias indutus Achillei.

There is a striking solemnity in the answer of Pantheus to Æneas :

> Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus
> Dardaniæ : fuimus Troës, fuit Ilium, et ingens
> Gloria Teucrorum, etc.

Dryden thus gives it :

> Then Pantheus, with a groan,
> Troy is no more, and Ilium was a town.
> The fatal day, the appointed hour is come
> When wrathful Jove's irrevocable doom
> Transfers the Trojan state to Grecian hands.
> The fire consumes the town, the foe commands.

My own translation runs thus ; and I quote it because it occurred to my mind immediately on reading your lordship's observations :

> 'T is come, the final hour,
> Th' inevitable close of Dardan power
> Hath come ! we *have* been Trojans, Ilium *was*
> And the great name of Troy ; now all things pass
> To Argos. So wills angry Jupiter,
> Amid the burning town the Grecians domineer.

I cannot say that "we *have* been," and "Ilium *was*," are as sonorous sounds as "fuimus" and "fuit"; but these

latter must have been as familiar to the Romans as the former to ourselves. I should much like to know if your Lordship disapproves of my translation here. I have one word to say upon ornament. It was my wish and labour that my translation should have far more of the *genuine* ornaments of Virgil than my predecessors. Dryden has been very careful of these, and profuse of his own, which seem to me very rarely to harmonise with those of Virgil; as, for example, describing Hector's appearance in the passage above alluded to,

> A *bloody shroud*, he seemed, and *bathed* in tears.
> I wept to see the *visionary* man.

Again,

> And all the wounds he for his country bore
> Now streamed afresh, and with *new purple ran.*

I feel it, however, to be too probable that my translation is deficient in ornament, because I must unavoidably have lost many of Virgil's, and have never without reluctance attempted a compensation of my own. Had I taken the liberties of my predecessors, Dryden especially, I could have translated nine books with the labour that three have cost me. The third book, being of a humbler character than either of the former, I have treated with rather less scrupulous apprehension, and have interwoven a little of my own; and, with permission, I will send it, ere long, for the benefit of your Lordship's observations, which really will be of great service to me if I proceed. Had I begun the work fifteen years ago, I should have finished it with pleasure; at present, I fear it will take more time than I either can or ought to spare. I do not think of going beyond the fourth book. . . .

CCCXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

COLEORTON HALL, 17th February, 1819.

I began my translation by accident. I continued it, with a hope to produce a work which would be to a certain degree *affecting*, which Dryden's is not to me in the least. Dr. Johnson has justly remarked that Dryden had little talent for the pathetic, and the tenderness of Virgil seems to me to escape him. Virgil's style is an inimitable mixture of the elaborately ornate and the majestically plain and touching. The former quality is much more difficult to reach than the latter, in which whosoever fails must fail through want of ability, and not through the imperfections of our language.

In my last I troubled you with a quotation from my own translation, in which I found a failure — "fuimus Troes," etc., "we have been Trojans," etc. It struck me afterwards that I might have found still stronger instances. At the close of the first book Dido is described as asking several questions of Venus,

> Nunc, quales Diomedis equi, nunc quantus Achilles,

which Dryden translates very nearly, I think, thus,

> The steeds of Diomede varied the discourse, etc.

My own translation is probably as faulty upon another principle:

> Of Hector asked if Priam o'er and o'er,
> What arms the son of bright Aurora wore,
> *What horses there of Diomede, had great*
> *Achilles — but, O Queen, the whole relate.*

These two lines will be deemed, I apprehend, hard and bald. So true is Horace's remark, "in vitium ducet culpæ fuga," etc.

CCCXXXIV

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

RYDAL MOUNT, February 19th, 1819.

Dear Wrangham,

I received your kind letter last night, for which you will accept my thanks. I write upon the spur of that mark of your regard — or my aversion to letter-writing might get the better of me. Rogers read me his poem [1] when I was in town about twelve months ago; but I have heard nothing of it since. It contained some very pleasing passages, but the title is much too grandiloquent for the performance, and the plan appeared to me faulty. I know little of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and wish to know less. I have seen in it articles so infamous that I do not choose to let it enter my doors. The publisher sent it to me some time ago, and I begged (civilly you will take for granted) not to be troubled with it any longer. Except now and then, when Southey accommodates me, I see no new books whatever, so that of course I know nothing of Miss Aikin's *Queen Elizabeth*.[2] I ought to have mentioned that the three sonnets advertised in *Blackwood's Magazine* as from my pen were truly so, but they were not of my sending.

[1] Rogers' *Human Life, a Poem*, was published in London in 1819. — Ed.

[2] Lucy Aikin, author of *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth* (1818). — Ed.

I am glad to hear you are engaged with Dr. Zouch. I find it difficult to speak publicly of good men while alive, especially if they are persons who have power; the world ascribes the eulogy to interested motives, or to an adulatory spirit, which I detest. But of Lord Lonsdale I will say to you that I do not think there exists in England a man of any rank more anxiously desirous to discharge his duty in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call him. His thought and exertions are constantly directed to that object, and the more he is known the more is he beloved and respected and admired.

I ought to have thanked you before for your version of Virgil's *Eclogues*,[1] which reached me at last. I have lately compared it line for line with the original, and think it very well done. I was particularly pleased with the skill you have shown in managing the contest between the shepherds in the third pastoral, where you have included in a succession of couplets the sense of Virgil's paired hexameter. I think I mentioned to you that these poems of Virgil have always delighted me much. There is frequently in them an elegance and a happiness which no translation can hope to equal. In point of fidelity your translation is very good indeed.

You astonish me with the account of your books, and I should have been still more astonished if you had told me you had read a third (shall I say a tenth) part of them. My reading powers were never very great, and now they are much diminished, especially by candle light. And as to buying books, I can affirm that on *new* books I have not spent five shillings for the last five years. I include reviews, magazines, pamphlets, etc., etc.; so that

[1] F. Wrangham published *Virgil's Eclogues in English Verse* in 1830. He probably sent the MS. to Wordsworth in 1819. — Ed.

there would be an end of Mr. Murray, and Mr. Longman, and Mr. Cadell etc., etc., if nobody had more power or inclination to buy than myself; and as to old books, my dealings in that way, for want of means, have been very trifling. Nevertheless (small and paltry as my collection is) I have not read a fifth part of it. I should however like to see your army.

> Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
> When Agrican, with all his Northern powers
> Besieged Albracca as Romances tell.[1]

Not that I accuse you of romancing. I verily believe that you have all the books you speak of. Believe, and like the devils, *tremble!* Dear Wrangham, are you and I ever likely to meet in this world again? Yours is a *corner* of the earth; mine is not so. I never heard of anybody going to Bridlington, but all the world comes to the Lakes. Farewell. Excuse this wretched scrawl. It is like all that proceeds from my miserable pen. Be assured I shall be glad to hear of you at any and all times; but literary news, except what I get occasionally from Southey, I have none to send you in return. Ever faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

As to the Nortons[2] the *Ballad* is my authority, and I require no more. It is much better than Virgil had for his *Æneid*. Perhaps I ought to have mentioned that the articles in *Blackwood's Magazine* that disgusted me so, were personal, — referring to myself and friends and acquaintances, especially Coleridge.

[1] *Paradise Regained*, Book III, ll. 337–339. — Ed.
[2] See *The White Doe of Rylstone, or the Fate of the Nortons*. — Ed.

CCCXXXV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

August 1, 1819.

. . . Have you seen *Peter Bell*, and *The Waggoner?* William has done nothing lately except a few sonnets, but these are exquisitely beautiful. . . . Rydal Mount is the nicest place in the world for children. You will almost long to be young again, as I do, when you see it; for the sake of trotting down the green banks, running and dancing on the mount, etc. . . .

CCCXXXVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

December 19th, 1819.

. . . Derwent is to go to his father after Christmas. This is a pity. Would you believe it possible, Coleridge expressed a wish that Sara could go to Highgate to be under the care of Mr. Gilman, the cleverest medical man with whom he was ever acquainted!! Hartley is, I believe, at Ottery with his uncles. . . .

CCCXXXVII

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

[No date.][1]

Dear Wrangham,

You are very good in sending one letter after another to inquire after a person so undeserving of attentions of this kind as myself. Dr. Johnson, I think, observes, or

[1] This letter may belong to the year 1811. See footnote on p. 511, Vol. I. — Ed.

rather is made to observe by some of his biographers, that no man delights to *give* what he is accustomed to *sell*. "For example: you, Mr. Thrale, would rather part with anything in this way than your porter." Now, though I have never been much of a salesman in matters of literature (the whole of my returns — I do not say *net profits*, but *returns* — from the writing trade not amounting to seven score pounds), yet, somehow or other, I manufacture a letter, and part with it, as reluctantly as if it were really a thing of price. But, to drop the comparison, I have so much to do with writing, in the way of labour and profession, that it is difficult to me to conceive how anybody can take up a pen but from constraint. My writing-desk is to me a place of punishment; and, as my penmanship sufficiently testifies, I always bend over it with some degree of impatience. All this is said that you may know the real cause of my silence, and not ascribe it in any degree to slight or forgetfulness on my part, or an insensibility to your worth and the value of your friendship. . . . As to my occupations, they look little at the present age; but I live in hope of leaving something behind me that by some minds will be valued.

I see no new books except by the merest accident. Of course your poem, which I should have been pleased to read, has not found its way to me. You inquire about old books; you might almost as well have asked for my teeth as for any of mine. The only *modern* books that I read are those of travels, or such as relate to matters of fact, — and the only modern books that I care for; but as to old ones, I am like yourself, — scarcely anything comes amiss to me. The little time I have to spare — the very little, I may say — all goes that way. If, however, in the *line of your profession* you want any bulky old commentaries on the Scriptures (such as not twelve strong men of these

degenerate days will venture — I do not say to *read*, but to *lift*), I can, perhaps, as a special favour, accommodate you.

I and mine will be happy to see you and yours here or anywhere ; but I am sorry the time you talk of is so distant ; a year and a half is a long time looking forwards, though, looking back, ten times as much is brief as a dream. My writing is wholly illegible — at least I fear so ; I had better, therefore, release you.

Believe me, my dear Wrangham,

Your affectionate friend,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon [1]

[1819.]

Mrs. Coleridge and her daughter are now here, both well. Since you left us Mrs. W. and I have been over to Sedbergh, to see the orphan family of Stephens ; we found their prospects brightening. The subscription is going on well, and situations have already been procured for several. To the honour of Liverpool, be it mentioned that Mr. Bolton — sometimes called the Liverpool Crœsus — has contributed £50. You speak of this great commercial place as I should have expected. In respect to visual impression, nothing struck me so much at Liverpool as one of the streets near the river, in which is a number of lofty and large warehouses, with the processes of receiving and discharging goods.

I am truly thankful for your travelling directions. . . .

[1] John Kenyon, the second cousin of Mrs. Barrett Browning, to whom she dedicated *Aurora Leigh*. — Ed.

1820

CCCXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Viscount Lowther

RYDAL MOUNT, February, 1820.

As one well acquainted with French affairs, do you think it would be prudent to lodge money in the French funds? I mean for one like myself, who cannot afford to lose anything. By the sale of an estate I have about £2000 to place somewhere or other.[1] Increase of interest is an object, as the education of my children is now reaching its most expensive point; and if without much risk as to regular payment of interest, or loss upon the principal, I could profit by placing it in the French funds, I should like to do so. . . .

[On the 13th of February Wordsworth wrote to Lord Lowther] . . . Sincere thanks for your letter. It has determined me to trust £2000 to the French funds. . . .

[1] The estate here referred to could not be the Applethwaite property, purchased and presented to Wordsworth by Sir George Beaumont in 1803, as that is still in the possession of Wordsworth's descendants. It was probably the Place Fell property which Lord Lowther's father helped him to acquire in 1810. — Ed.

CCCXL

William Wordsworth to John Wilson[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, May 5th, 1820.

My dear Sir,

Of the particular fitness of any one to fill the chair of Moral Philosophy, in the University of Edinburgh, I am an incompetent judge, having only a vague notion of the duties of the office. But if the choice is to depend upon pre-eminence of natural powers of mind, cultivated by excellent education, and habitually directed to the study of ethics in the most comprehensive sense of the word; upon such powers, and great energy of character with correspondent industry, I have no hesitation in saying that the electors, the university, and Scotland in general, must be fortunate in no common degree if among the competitors there be found one more eligible than yourself.

Wishing you, cordially, success in the pursuit of this honourable object of ambition,

I remain,

My dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[1] A copy of the testimonial given by Wordsworth to John Wilson (Christopher North), who was elected to the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh. — Ed.

CCCXLI

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, July 23d, 1820.

My dear Sir,

My eyes have lately become so irritable that I am again forced to employ an amanuensis.

I learned with much concern from Monkhouse and Tillbrooke that you had been unwell for some time, and am truly grieved not to find in your last an assurance that your health is restored. I hear from Miss Hutchinson such striking accounts of the benefit which invalids derive from Harrowgate waters, and of their general salutary effect (in which she speaks from experience, having been there lately with a sick friend), that I more than hope you will have reason also to speak highly in their praise for their effect upon yourself.

We are disappointed at not seeing you before you go into Scotland, myself more particularly so; because I have held out expectations to an Irish gentleman, who has lately taken lodgings in this neighbourhood, that I might accompany him on a tour through a considerable part of his country, including the two extremities, Killarney and the Giant's Causeway, which he says might easily be accomplished in five weeks by our shipping at Whitehaven for Dublin. If this plan should be adopted, I fear I must purchase the pleasure at the cost of not seeing you unless you could be tempted to prolong your stay in this neighbourhood till towards the end of September. If I *do* go (which certainly I should not have thought of this summer, were it not for the disordered state of my eyes), I shall make all possible speed back

for the sake of seeing you and your brother, to whom I have a strong wish to be made known. Happy should I be, could what I have thrown out tempt you to make Ireland your object instead of Scotland. I have myself made three tours in Scotland, but cannot point out anything worthy of notice that is not generally known. Of particular sights and spots those which pleased me most were (to begin with the northernmost) the course of the river Beauly up to the sawmills, about twenty miles beyond Inverness, — the fall of Foyers upon Loch Ness, (a truly noble thing, if one is fortunate as to the quantity of water), and Glen Coe. These lie beyond the limit of your route, and within your route I was not much struck with anything but what everybody knows. . . .

I am glad you have seen Bolton Priory. You probably know that Goredale, Malham Cove, and Wethercote Cove, which lie north of Bolton, are interesting objects, though dependent — two of them — upon water; and we have had such a drought as was never before known.

Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Hutchinson, and my sister, who writes for me, join me in kindest remembrance and sincere wishes for the recovery of your health. We are all well, and shall be most happy to see you.

Ever sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

If you have not an introduction to Sir Walter Scott, and should wish for one, pray let me know and I will write to him.

CCCXLII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

BERNE, August 6th, [1820.]

My dear Sir,

We arrived here yesterday all in good health and spirits, and very much pleased with our travels. We intend to depart to-morrow morning for Thun, and shall proceed by Interlaken, Grindelwald, etc., to Lucerne, making little tours and turnings by the way. I hope it will not be long before you find us out somewhere; and, to assist you in so doing, we shall take care to leave notices at the inns of our route. We intend to go as far as Milan, but further than Milan I think we shall not attempt to go, — seeing by the way all that time and strength will permit. Often and often have we wished for you while we have been in Germany. At the time of till-paying, you would have saved us great trouble, and sometimes no little vexation.

My brother's eyes are better, though not strong. My sister makes a very good traveller, and I — though not the stoutest of the three — have done pretty well, and we have all enjoyed ourselves. . . .

We shall all rejoice to see you. I am your faithful and affectionate friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — We were delighted with Heidelberg, and with the kindness and hospitality of your friend, Mr. Pickford, and his family.

OUR INTENDED ROUTE

Thun	Lauterbrunnen	Over the Brünig
Interlaken	Grindelwald	To Lucerne

Brunnen	Lugano	Varese
Schwyz	Porlezza	Laveno
Altorf	Menaggio on the	Boromean Islands
Over the St. Gothard	Lake of Como	Domo d'Ossola
To Bellinzona	Como	Cross the Simplon
To Locarno	Milan	into the Valais

CCCXLIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

MILAN, Sunday, September 3d, 1820.

My dearest Friend,

. . . But I forget that I am writing to you from Italy. This is a fête day, and our quiet English Sabbath. Mary and I are returned to our bedrooms, after a long walk through the streets to see a military exhibition. Four thousand soldiers, Bohemians and Italians with laurel twigs in their caps, were assembled at mass, a temporary altar being erected for the occasion. The spectacle, with the music, sacred and military, was very splendid. The jingling of bells never ceases. We wait here to be summoned by the gentlemen to go to mass at the cathedral, which is certainly on the outside the most splendid and *beautiful* building I ever beheld; yet wanting the solemnity and massiveness of a place of worship. In those respects how inferior to our cathedrals! It is all of polished marble, exquisitely wrought, and the statues are not to be numbered by the gazer, but I believe there are more than two thousand. Every small pinnacle supports a statue, the airy figure lifted up to the sky. The inside is very imposing, the pillars very fine, but there are many faults to be found in the architecture. One of Buonaparte's works was the finishing of this cathedral, and I wish he had

never done anything worse. The Italians always call him *Napoleone*, and he seems to be a great favourite here, and the people being what they are, and having no dignified government of their own to be attached to, it is no wonder. . . .

CCCXLIV

Dorothy Wordsworth to John Kenyon

PLAYFORD HALL, NEAR IPSWICH,
December 19th, 1820.

My dear Sir,

I received your letter dated Bracebridge this morning, and have written to Miss Rogers to request that she will do me the favour to permit you to see the little sarcophagus which you mention, if it is in her possession. To prevent loss of time I have desired Miss Rogers to be so kind as to address a note to you at Mrs. Dunn's, Montagu Square.

I had a letter from my sister a few days ago. She and my brother were well, and had fixed upon the 20th as the day of their departure; so I calculate that they will reach home two days before Christmas.

My nephew William is here in high health and spirits. He is to go to Cambridge on Saturday, where I shall join him a few days before the end of his holidays; and about the 20th of next month I intend to set off for Rydal, so if you are able to procure the candle-shade before that time, I can take charge of it.

Hoping that before you again quit England your wanderings may lead you into the north, where we shall again have the pleasure of meeting you, I remain, dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

1821

CCCXLV

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

6th January, 1821.

My dear Sir George,

Yesterday I performed a great feat — wrote no less than seven letters, reserving yours for to-day, that I might have more leisure, and you consequently less trouble in reading. I have been a good deal tossed about since our arrival here. Mrs. W. and I were first called away by the sudden death of my kinsman, Mr. Myers.[1] We went to college together, and were inseparables for many years. I saw him buried in Millom church, by the side of his wife. The churchyard is romantically situated, Duddon Sands on one side, and a rocky hill scattered over with ancient trees on the other. Close by are the remains of the old castle of the Huddlestones, part of which are converted into farm-houses, and the whole embowered in tall trees that tower up from the sides and bottom of the circular moat. The churchyard is in like manner girt round with trees. The church is of striking architecture, and apparently of remote antiquity.

We entered with the funeral train, the day being too far advanced to allow the clergyman to see to read the service, and no light had been provided, so we sat some

[1] See Vol. I, p. 58, note. — Ed.

time in solemn silence. At last one candle was brought, which served both for minister and clerk, casting a wan light on their faces. On my right hand were two stone figures in a recumbent position (like those of the monument in Coleorton church) — Huddlestones of other years — and the voice of the minister was accompanied, and almost interrupted, by the slender sobbing of a young person, an Indian by half blood, and by the father's side a niece of the deceased wife of the person whom we were interring. She hung over the coffin and continued this Oriental lamentation till the service was over, everybody else, except one faithful servant, being apparently indifferent. Mrs. W., I find, has mentioned our return by Duddonside, and how much we were pleased with the winter appearance of my favourite river.

Since that expedition I have been called to Appleby, and detained there upon business. In returning, I was obliged to make a circuit which showed me for the time several miles of the course of that beautiful stream, the Eden, from the bridge near Temple Sowerby down to Kirkoswald. Part of this tract of country I had indeed seen before, but not from the same points of view. It is a charming region, particularly at the spot where the Eden and Emont join. The rivers appeared exquisitely brilliant, gliding under rocks and through green meadows, with woods and sloping cultivated grounds, and pensive russet moors interspersed, and along the circuit of the horizon, lofty hills and mountains clothed, rather than concealed, in fleecy clouds and resplendent vapours.

My road brought me suddenly and unexpectedly upon that ancient monument called by the country people "Long Meg and her Daughters." Everybody has heard of it, and so had I from very early childhood, but had

never seen it before. Next to Stonehenge, it is beyond dispute the most noble relic of the kind that this or probably any other country contains. Long Meg is a single block of unhewn stone, eighteen feet high, at a small distance from a vast circle of other stones, some of them of huge size, though curtailed of their stature by their own incessant pressure upon it.

Did you ever see that part of the Eden? If not, you must contrive it. I was brought to Kirkoswald, but had not time to visit Nunnery, which I purpose to do next summer. Indeed, we have a thought of taking the whole course of the Eden from Carlisle upwards, which will bring us near the source of the Lune, so that we may track that river to Lancaster, and so return home by Flookburgh and Cartmel.

It is now high time to say a word about Coleorton. I often have the image before me of your pleasant labours, and see the landscape growing under your patient hand. The large picture you were about must be finished long since. How are you satisfied with it? I am not a little proud that our scenery employs your pencil so sedulously after a visit to the Alps. It has lost little in my estimation by the comparison. At first I thought the coppice woods — and, alas! we have little else — very shabby substitutes for the unshorn majesty of what I had lately seen. The rocks and crags also seem to want breadth and repose, their surfaces appearing too often crumbled and frittered. But, on the other hand, the comparison is often to our advantage. The lakes and streams not only are so much more pure and crystalline, but the surfaces of the one and the courses of the other present a far more attractive variety — a superiority which deserves to be set off at length, but which will strike your practised

mind immediately. It happened that Southey, who was so good as to come over to see us, mentioned to me Nichols' book [1] with great commendation.

Ever yours,

W. W.

CCCXLVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Wednesday Evening, [January, 1821.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . My dear brother is quite well, and so cheerful with the boys, it is delightful to see him. I played a game at "Speculation" with the lads last night; but I found it very dull compared with our Playford pools at "Commerce." . . . Christopher [2] is an extraordinary boy. If God grant him health and life, he will be an honour to his family I feel assured. We have had a nice walk together; but I constantly regret Charles's [3] absence, to break through the shyness of his brothers, especially of John. He is a very thoughtful, intelligent boy, and I doubt not an excellent scholar, but his shyness is painful to him I think; and he struck me as being so exceedingly like Charles Lloyd, when I first met him last night, that I felt uneasy at the resemblance. Probably he would remind you of his mother. I do not however see the particular likeness to her. . . .

[1] Doubtless Nichols' *History and Antiquities of Leicester.* — Ed.

[2] Christopher Wordsworth, nephew of the poet, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln. — Ed.

[3] Charles Wordsworth, also nephew of the poet, afterwards Bishop of St. Andrews. — Ed.

CCCXLVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 23, 1821.

My dear Friend,

We have had no tidings of the books which were to be sent us by the bookseller near Charing Cross, which — if no misfortune had happened to them — might have been here upwards of six weeks ago. We suffer no little inconvenience from the want of them; and along with the books the package contained paper, which not having arrived, I am obliged to write to you on this shabby half folio sheet. Everything has been unlucky relating to this matter; for being uneasy at not receiving the books nearly a month since, I sent a letter to a friend to be franked for you, your address being given in the inside of the cover, which had been thrown into the fire I suppose as soon as the letter was opened; for to my great mortification the letter came back to me with a notice that my friend did not know what use was to be made of it. . . .

I have no news from this place. My sister is still at Cambridge. Mr. Southey came over to see me since my return; he is quite well, but looks older than might be expected. He is about to publish a poem[1] occasioned by the death of his late Majesty, which will bring a nest of hornets about his ears, and will satisfy no party. It is written in English hexameter verse, and in some passages with great spirit. But what do you think? In enumerating the glorified spirits of the reign of George III, admitted along with their earthly sovereign into the new

[1] *The Vision of Judgment.* — Ed.

Jerusalem, neither Dr. Johnson nor Mr. Pitt are to be found! Love to the laureate for this treasonable judgment will be the cry of the Tories.

I am glad to find that Barry Cornwall's play [1] has been so successful, and if you see him, pray be so kind as to give him my congratulations. Say all that is kind to the Lambs, and to Talfourd, and to the Monkhouses, but with them we are in correspondence.

Mrs. Wordsworth desires her kindest remembrances. We often talk of you, and your good humour and accommodating manners.

Ever sincerely yours,

W. Wordsworth.

CCCXLVIII

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

Rydal Mount, 5th February, 1821.

My dear Friend,

Many thanks for your valuable present of the shades, which reached me two days ago by the hands of my sister. I have tried them, and they answer their purpose perfectly; Mrs. W. says they have no fault but being over fine for the person they are intended for! I, on the other hand, am pleased to see ornament engrafted upon infirmity, and promise that I will take care neither to sully nor spoil such elegant productions.

We have had a charming season since we reached Westmoreland; winter disarmed of all his terrors, and proving that it is not necessary always to run away from old England for the sake of fine weather.

[1] The tragedy of *Mirandola*. — Ed.

Southey was so good as to come over and see us; he is well, but always looks rather pale and thin in winter, which seems to add a few years to his age. He is as busy as ever, and about to publish a political poem which will satisfy no party.[1]

. . . Cambridge is a "pleasant place," and so is Rydal Mount. Come, and make it pleasanter; or, if that is not to be, let us hear at least of your movements.

My sister seems to think, and yet not to think, that she ought to have answered your last letter; she stumbled out an apology to be transmitted by me.

I did not like the frame of it, and said that you will readily forgive her, if she makes up for that neglect by additional application to her journal,[2] which I am sorry to find is little advanced, talking being, as you know, a much more easy, and — to one party at least — a more pleasant thing than writing.

CCCXLIX

[*William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson*]

[Postmark, March 13, 1821. — Ed.]

My dear Friend,

The books arrived safe. You were very good in writing me so long a letter; and kind, after your own Robinsonian way, going to inquire after our long and far banished little one. As we hear from himself never, and of him but seldom, we cannot but be at some times anxious, remembering the two short fits of illness which he had last summer. You will be pleased to hear that the two ladies are busy

[1] See p. 141. — Ed.

[2] *Journal of a Tour on the Continent* (1820). — Ed.

in transcribing their journals; neither of them have yet reached the point where you joined us, but many a spot where we all wished you had been with us; often, I own from our want of an interpreter, and not unfrequently from less selfish motives. Your determination to withdraw from your profession, in sufficient time for an autumnal harvest of leisure, is of a piece with the rest of your consistent resolves and practices. Consistent I have said, and why not *rational;* the word would surely have been added, had not I felt that it was awkwardly loading the sentence, and so truth would have been sacrificed to a point of taste, but for after compunction. Full surely you will do well, but take time; it would be ungrateful to quit in haste a profession that has used you so civilly. Would that I could encourage the hope of passing a winter with you at Rome, about the time you mention, which is just the period I should myself select. But the expense is greater than I dare think of facing, though five years hence the education of my eldest son will be nearly finished; but in the meantime I cannot foresee how we shall be able to lay by anything either for travelling, or other purposes. Poor Scott![1] living in this solitude, we have thought more about him, and suffered more anxiety and sorrow on his account, than you among the many interruptions of London can have leisure to feel. I do not recollect any other English author's perishing in the same way. It is an innovation the effect of others which promise no good to the republic of letters or to the country. We have had ribaldry, and sedition, and slanders enough in our literature heretofore, but no epithet which these periods deserved is so foul as that merited by the present, viz., *the treacherous.*

[1] John Scott, editor of *The Champion* newspaper, and afterwards of the *London Magazine.* — Ed.

As to Scott, he need not have lost his life,[1] if the coroner's inquest may be trusted, but for the intemperance and ignorance of his friend. At a proper time I should much wish inquiries to be made from myself after Mrs. Scott, who must know that I was acquainted with her husband. This perhaps you could assist me in effecting; in the meanwhile could you let me know how she bears her affliction, and what circumstances she is left in.

I have read Cornwall's tragedy,[2] and think of it pretty much as you seem to do. The feelings are cleverly touched in it; but the situations for exhibiting them are produced not only by sacrifice of the respectability of the persons concerned, but with great (and I should have thought unnecessary) violation of probability and common sense. But it appears to me, in the present late age of the world, a most difficult task to construct a good tragedy, free from stale and mean contrivances, and animated by new and suitable characters. So that I am inclined to judge Cornwall gently, and sincerely rejoice in his success. As to poetry, I am sick of it; it overruns the country in all the shapes of the plagues of Egypt, frog-poets (the croaker's), mice-poets (the nibbler's), a class rhyming to mice (which shall be nameless), and fly-poets. Gray in his dignified way calls flies the "insect youth," a term wonderfully applicable upon this occasion. But let us desist, or we shall be accused of envying the rising generation! Be assured, however, that it is not fear of such accusation which leads me to praise a youngster who writes verses in the *Etonian*, to some of which our Cumberland paper has introduced me, and some I saw at Cambridge. He is as hopeful, I think, as any of

[1] He was killed in a duel. — Ed.

[2] *Mirandola.* — Ed.

them — by name Montsay.[1] If you should ever fall in with him, tell him that he has pleased me much. My sister sends her very kind love, and expressions of bitter regret that she did not see you at Cambridge, where Mary and I passed thirteen days ; and what with the company (although I saw very little of him) of my dear brother, our stately apartments, with all the venerable portraits there, that awe one into humility, old friends and new acquaintances, and a thousand familiar remembrances, and freshly conjured-up recollections, I enjoyed myself not a little. I should like to send you a sonnet composed at Cambridge, but it is reserved for cogent reasons — to be imparted in due time. I have been scribbling with an infamous pen, and we have no quills, — which makes the further want of a new sheet the less regretted. Farewell. Happy shall we be to see you. . . .

Congratulate Talfourd from me upon his new honours [2] and add a thousand good wishes.

CCCL

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

March 27, [1821.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . William is quite well, and very busy, though he has not looked at *The Recluse* or the poem on his own

[1] So it is written in the MS. The reference is to John Moultrie (1799–1874), poet and clergyman, who wrote in the *Etonian*, and in *Knight's Quarterly*, under the nom de plume of Gerard Montgomery. In the *Etonian*, in 1820, appeared *My Brother's Grave*, and *Godiva;* also lines on *The Coliseum*, and an article "On Wordsworth's Poetry," signed G. M. — Ed.

[2] Sergeant Talfourd was called to the Bar in 1821. He married in 1822. — Ed.

life ; and this disturbs us. After fifty years of age there is no time to spare, and unfinished works should not, if it be possible, be left behind. This he feels, but the will never governs *his* labours. How different from Southey, who can go as regularly as clock-work, from history to poetry, from poetry to criticism, and so on to biography, or anything else. If their minds could each spare a little to the other, how much better for both! William is at present composing a series of sonnets on a subject which I am sure you would never divine, — the Church of England, — but you will perceive that, in the hands of a poet, it is one that will furnish ample store of poetic materials. In some of the sonnets he has, I think, been most successful. . . . Have you seen Southey's *Vision of Judgment?* I like both the metre, and most part of the poem, very much. It is composed with great animation, and some passages are very beautiful; but the intermixture of familiar names pushes you down a frightful descent at times, and I wish he had avoided the very words of Scripture. The king has sent him a message that he had read the poem twice over, and thanks him for the dedication. . . .

CCCLI

William Wordsworth to Viscount Lowther

March 28th, 1821.

. . . I am truly sorry for what you say about the probable fate of the Catholic question, and feel grateful to you as an Englishman for your persevering exertions. Canning's speech, as given in the *Morning Chronicle* and *Courier*, is a tissue of glittering declamation and slender

sophistry. He does not appear to look at the effect of this measure upon the dissenters at all; and as to the inference that the catholics will be quiet when possessed of their object, because they have been patient under their long privation, first, we may deny the premises — has not every concession been employed as a vantage-ground for another attack? and, had it been otherwise, is it true that they have been patient? What says history as to the long enduring quiet of men who have an object in view? The grandees of the Puritans, says Heylyn in his life of archbishop Laud,[1] after the first heats were over in Queen Elizabeth's time, carried their work for *thirty* years together, like moles under the ground, not casting up any earth before them, till they had made so strong a party in the House of Commons as was able to hold the thing to their own conditions. Mr. Canning finds the Catholic peers supporters of episcopacy in Charles the First's time, and concludes, therefore, that they were friends to the Church of England, because bishops make a part of its constitution. Would it not have been more consonant to history to ascribe this care of reformed bishoprics to the love of an institution favourable to that exaltation of religion by which abuses were produced that wrought the overthrow of papacy in England, and to some lurking expectations that if the sees could be preserved, they might not improbably be filled at no distant time by catholic prelates. . . .

[1] The title of Heylyn's book is *Cyprianus Anglicus*. — Ed.

CCCLII

William Wordsworth to Viscount Lowther

[No date, but evidently 1821.]

. . . I have read with the utmost attention the debates on the Catholic question. The opinion I share with you remains unaltered. We have heard much of candour and forbearance, etc., but these qualities appear to be all on one side, viz. on that of the advocates of existing laws. Among the innovators there is a haughtiness, an air of insolent superiority to light and knowledge, which no strength of argument could justify, much less the sophisms and assumptions which they advance. I am aware that if the Catholics are to get into Parliament, ambition and worldly interest will have keen sway over them as over other men ; and it need not be dreaded, therefore, that they will all be, upon every occasion, upon one side. But still the *esprit de corps* cannot but be stronger with them than other bodies for obvious reasons ; and looking at the constitution of the House, how nicely balanced parties have often been, and what small majorities have repeatedly decided most momentous questions, I cannot but tremble at the prospect of introducing men who *may* turn, and (if they act consistently with the spirit of their religion, and even with its open professions) *must* turn their mutual fidelity against our Protestant establishment, till, in co-operation with other dissenters and infidels, they have accomplished its overthrow. . . .

. . . The Catholic claims are to be referred to a committee! God grant that these people may be baffled! How Mr. Canning and other enemies to reform in Parliament can, without gross inconsistency, be favourers of

their cause, I am unable to conceive. Mr. Canning objects to reform because it would be the means of sending into the House of Commons members whose station, opinions, and sentiments differ from those of the persons who are now elected, and who would prove less friendly to the constitution in Church and State. Good heavens! and won't this be the case to a most formidable extent if you admit Catholics, a measure to be followed up, as it inevitably will, sooner or later, with the abolition of the Test and Corporation acts, and a proportional increase of the political power of the dissenters, who are to a man hostile to the Church. . . .

CCCLIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[May, 1821.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . I can walk with as little fatigue as when I was twenty. Not long ago my brother and I spent a whole day on the mountains. We went by a circuitous road to the top of Fairfield, walking certainly not *less* than fourteen miles; and I was not in the least tired. My brother is still hard at work with his sonnets. . . . I have not yet finished my journal, though at times I have worked very hard from ten o'clock in the morning till dinner time, at four. When it is done, I fear it will prove very tedious reading even to friends, who have not themselves visited the places where we were. Had not my brother so very much wished me to do my best, I am sure I should never have had the resolution to go further than just re-copy what I did by snatches, and very

irregularly, at the time; but to please him I have amplified and arranged; and a long affair will come out of it, which I cannot think any person can possibly have the patience to read through; but which, through sympathy and a desire to revive dormant recollections, may in patches be interesting to a few others. For my own sake, however, the time is not thrown away; and when we are dead and gone, any memorial of us will be satisfactory to the children, especially Dorothy. Her mother's journal is already transcribed, and not being so lengthy as mine, it cannot but be interesting, and very amusing. She has read it to Mrs. Gee and Miss L., . . . and they were delighted. Her course was much wiser than mine. She wrote regularly and straightforward, and has done little more than re-copy; whereas, all that I did would have been almost worthless, dealt with in that way. There is some excuse for me in my illness which threw me back. I have not read a single word of Mary's, — being determined to finish my own first, and then make comparisons for correction, and insertion of what I may have omitted. . . .

CCCLIV

William Wordsworth to Sir Walter Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, Aug. 23, 1821.

Dear Sir Walter,

The bearer, Mr. Robinson, being on a tour in Scotland, is desirous of the honour of an introduction to you; which, though aware of the multiplicity of your engagements, and sensible of the value of your time, I have not scrupled to give. Mr. R. is a highly esteemed friend of myself, and of those who are dearest to me; he

accompanied us during our tour among the Alps last summer, and I can say from experience that he will prove no unworthy spectator of anything which you may be kind enough to recommend to his notice in that country which you have so nobly illustrated. Mr. R. has been much upon the Continent, and is extensively read in German literature, speaking the language with the ease of a native.

In the last letter I had from you, you spoke of the pleasure you should have in revisiting our Arcadia. I assure you that you would be most welcome. When I think how small is the space between your residence upon the Tweed and mine in the valley of Ambleside, I wonder we see so little of each other. In all cases, however, believe me, with sincere regard and high admiration,

Faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

Mrs. W. and my sister unite with me in remembrances to yourself and Mrs. Scott.

CCCLV

William Wordsworth to Walter Savage Landor

Rydal Mount, near Ambleside,
September 3d, 1821.

My dear Sir,

. . . I feel myself much honoured by the present of your book of Latin poems,[1] and it arrived at a time when I had the use of my eyes for reading; and with great pleasure did I employ them in the perusal of the dissertation annexed to your poems, which I read several times; but the poems themselves I have not been able to look into, for I was seized with a fit of composition at

[1] The *Idyllia Heroica decem Pisa*, 1820. — Ed.

that time, and deferred the pleasure to which your poems invited me till I could give them an undivided attention. . . . We live here somewhat singularly circumstanced — in solitude during nearly nine months of the year, and for the rest in a round of engagements. I have nobody near me who reads Latin, so that I can only speak of your essay from recollection. You will not perhaps be surprised when I state that I differ from you in opinion as to the propriety of the Latin language being employed by moderns for works of taste and imagination. Miserable would have been the lot of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, if they had preferred the Latin to their mother tongue (there is, by-the-by, a Latin translation of Dante which you do not seem to know), and what could Milton, who was surely no mean master of the Latin tongue, have made of his *Paradise Lost*, had that vehicle been employed instead of the language of the Thames and Severn! Should we even admit that all modern dialects are comparatively changeable, and therefore limited in their efficacy, may not the sentiment which Milton so pleasingly expresses, when he says he is content to be read in his native isle only, be extended to durability; and is it not more desirable to be read with affection and pride, and familiarly for five hundred years, by all orders of minds and all ranks of people, in your native tongue, than only by a few scattered scholars for the space of three thousand? Had your idylliums been in English, I should long ere this have been as well acquainted with them as with your *Gebir*, and with your other poems.

I met with a hundred things in your *Dissertation*[1] that fell in with my own judgments, but there are many opinions

[1] Doubtless the prose appendix to *Idyllia Heroica*, entitled *De Cultu atque Usu Latini Sermones*, etc., at p. 215 of which occurs a complimentary reference to Wordsworth. — Ed.

which I should like to talk over with you. Several of the separate remarks, upon Virgil in particular, though perfectly just, would perhaps have been better placed in notes or an appendix; they are details that obstruct the view of the whole. Are you not also penurious in your praise of Gray? The fragment at the commencement of his fourth book, in which he laments the death of West, in cadence and sentiment, touches me in a manner for which I am grateful. The first book also of the same poems appears to me as well executed as anything of that kind is likely to be. Is there not a speech of Solon to which the concluding couplet of Gray's sonnet bears a more pointed resemblance than to any of the passages you have quoted? He was told not to grieve for the loss of his son, as tears would be of no avail; "and for that very reason," replied he, "do I weep." It is high time I should thank you for the honourable mention you have made of me. It could not but be grateful to me to be praised by a poet who has written verses of which I would rather have been the author than of any produced in our time. What I now write to you, I have frequently said to many. . . .

I remain, my dear sir, sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCLVI

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

Rydal Mount, Sept. 22d, 1821.

My dear Sir,

My eyes are better than when you were here, but an amanuensis is still expedient, and Mrs. W. therefore writes

for me to the whistling of as melancholy a wind as ever blew, coming as it does after a long series of broken weather, which has been injurious to the harvest, and when we were calculating upon a change for the better. The season with us has been much less unfavourable, I fear, than in many other parts, — though our exercise has never been altogether prevented, and we have had some beautiful days. Two schemes of "particular pleasure" have been frustrated thus far, a second trip to Borrowdale — including the summit of Scawfell — and, for my daughter and her school-companions, an excursion to Furness Abbey. Anxiously have they looked in vain for steadily bright weather, thinking little about the spoiling of the crops by the damp days, rains, and winds.

Since your departure we have seen no persons of note except Dr. Holland, the Albanian traveller, and otherwise less agreeably distinguished. We have two additional neighbours (not to speak of the new-born Rotha, for that name the infant is to bear in honour of the stream upon whose banks she was born) under Mr. Quillinan's roof, in the persons of Colonel Holmes and his lady, sister to Mrs. Q. The colonel is a good-natured old soldier, who has risen without purchase to his present rank, and stood the brunt of war in the peninsula and in America. At Ambleside there was a *gay* ball; for such it appeared to many contributors to its splendour, but not so to the paradoxical lady of Calgarth.[1] *She* thought nothing of it, because there was no gentleman there, *as she said*, "above five feet eight inches," — though there were present two handsome officers, one a Waterloo medalist, and both of good stature. This lady's ideal of a partner — and such

[1] Calgarth Hall, the residence of the Bishop of Landaff. — Ed.

she hoped to meet — is a "*tall* slender person with black hair and a bald front." What a pity that you, or your brother, could not have been put into a stretching machine, and conveyed to Ambleside by steam, through the air, or under the earth. Fashion and fancy, I can assure you, run high in this neighbourhood as to these matters. At Keswick resides a Miss Stanger, her father a Cheapside trader who has built a house near the vicarage. This lady, celebrated for beauty, enviable for fortune, would not allow that a ball could be mustered at Keswick by all the collegians there. "Send for a parcel of officers from Carlisle," said she, "and then something may be done." What a slight upon the gown! and from a blue-stocking lady too, who is an *élève* of Mrs. Grant[1] of the Mountains! "Come, come," said she to a young Oxonian, "let us walk out this evening that I may catch a cold, and have an excuse for not going to the thing!"[2]

Dear Mr. Kenyon,

Writing in my own name, I thank you, while William is taking a turn, after dictating the above flourish, for your agreeable and acceptable present which was duly received. The char shall be forwarded to the address, as soon as we can procure any that we know to be excellent. I shall anxiously expect your *next commission*, which I hope will be to look out for a house. By-the-by, Mr. Gee has taken one at Keswick, so it will be well to know what Mr. Tillbrook means to do with the Ivy Cot, which will

[1] Mrs. Grant of Laggan, author of *Letters from the Mountains*. — Ed.

[2] Sarah Hutchinson must have read this letter before it was dispatched, because she inserts the remark here: "*Not true*. She said 'the ball.' S. H." — Ed.

be vacant next Whitsuntide. But I must not consume more space, as W. is not done. Very sincerely yours,

Willy leaves us to-morrow. M. W.

I was going to say something about your tour, but Mrs. W. tells me that what I meant to speak of was mentioned when you were here, so nothing remains but good wishes in which all my family join, both to yourself and to your brother, who stands in particular need of them if he meditates marriage.

Very affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCLVII

William Wordsworth to Francis Chantrey

Rydal Mount, Oct., 1821.

My dear Sir,

If I recollect right I ordered seven casts.[1] One of them was intended for the bearer of this, my friend Mr. Robinson. He wishes to have another, and possibly more, with which I beg he may be furnished; for which himself will pay, and give directions whither they are to be sent. If I am not mistaken, the price which the person making these casts charges is four guineas. Allow me to ask whether, in case fifteen or twenty are required, he could not supply them at a lower rate for the accommodation of my friends.

Since my last I have heard from Sir George Beaumont, who expresses himself in the highest terms of the bust,

[1] Of his bust of the poet. — Ed.

and adds a world of most agreeable things concerning its author, — both as an artist and a man, — which it would give me pleasure to repeat, but I spare your blushes.

I have requested Mr. Carruthers, who painted a portrait of me some years ago,[1] to call for a sight of the bust. He is an amiable young man, whom a favourable opening induced to sacrifice the pencil to the pen, not the pen of authorship, — he is too wise for that, — but the pen of the counting house, which he is successfully driving at Lisbon. I remain, with sincere regards from Mrs. W. and my sister, to yourself and Mrs. Chantrey,

Most faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCLVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Nov. 24, 1821.

My dear Friend,

The three or four days after you left us were most provokingly sunny and delightful. I cannot say that we have had much vexation of the like kind since that time; for the rain has day by day fallen in torrents with a chance twenty-four hours of fine weather between; and we consoled ourselves as well as we could for our mortification in having lost you before the fine weather came, in thinking that it would make your journey pleasant on the outside of the coach, and also in remembering how cheerful and merry we were in spite of wind and rain, during the short time you were with us. . . . I write now because I

[1] In 1817. — Ed.

have to ask your advice for a young man, the son of our friend Mrs. Cookson of Kendal, who is in the last year of his clerkship with a solicitor at Kendal, and is looking forward to his removal to London. . . . Will you be so good as to point out what seems to you most likely to be serviceable in the regulation of his views? — and perhaps you may know some respectable solicitor who may be inclined to take him into his office. Mr. Strickland Cookson is a remarkably steady and sensible young man, very attentive to business, and has, I doubt not, given great satisfaction to his present master; and you already know from us that he is come of good parents. . . . He has no particular wish to settle in the country after his clerkship, rather the contrary; though we think that he would have a better chance than most young men in his native town. If there should be an opening for him in London, he would prefer settling there.

I mention these circumstances, that you may be the better able to judge what kind of practice for the time he has yet to serve may be most likely to profit him; and perhaps in thinking the matter over you may hit upon some judicious friend or acquaintance in the law who may be glad to take such a young man into his service. . . .

I should have continued to wait yet a week or two longer in hopes of a letter from you, but for the present opportunity. You know you had several matters to write about. Do not forget the pulpit at Brussels, and if you have any notes respecting Milan cathedral, I should be grateful if you would send them. . . .

My brother's eyes are no worse. He has written some beautiful poems since you left us, which — as Miss Hutchinson has transcribed them for Mr. Monkhouse — you will have an opportunity of seeing. I am sure they

will delight both you and him. The sonnets have been at rest.

Poor Mrs. Quillinan has been removed to Lancaster; and you will be sorry to hear that her mind is not more settled than when Mrs. W. was attending upon her, though she is less turbulent. Her eldest little girl is with Mrs. Gee; and her husband at present goes to visit her. My brother accompanied Mr. Q. on a tour to the Caves, Studley Park, Knaresborough, and York. This was of great service to the forlorn husband, who is sadly unsettled at home. My brother very much enjoyed his tour. I have not had a single line from my dear and good friend, Mrs. Clarkson, since Playford Hall had the honour of becoming a royal residence; and we have been anxious to hear how the parties were satisfied with each other, on nearer acquaintance. Mrs. C. talked of going to London before Christmas; and perhaps she is there now, for the papers tell us that the Queen and Princesses have left Playford.

It gave us great concern to hear of the death of John Lamb.[1] Though his brother and sister did not see very much of him, the loss will be deeply felt. Pray tell us particularly how they are, and give our kind love to them. I fear Charles's pen will be stopped for a time. What delightful papers he has lately written for that otherwise abominable magazine! *The Old King's Benchers*[2] is exquisite; indeed the only one I do not quite like is the *Grace before Meat.*

I hope you see the Monkhouses often, though he has become a home-stayer. I cannot express how it would

[1] John Lamb, "the broad, burly, jovial," as Talford put it, died in November, 1821. — Ed.

[2] *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple.* — Ed.

grieve me if anything should prevent their intended journey next summer. It seemed quite unnatural not to have him amongst us during some part of the last. . . .

It is eleven o'clock. I have yet another letter to write.

Believe me, dear friend and fellow-traveller,

Yours faithfully,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

I have been reading to my brother what I had written concerning Strickland Cookson, and he desires me to add that Mr. Wilson of Kendal, whom he serves at present, has respectable connexions in London, among whom is Mr. Addison of Staple Inn, successor to, and formerly partner with, our late brother; but it is thought here that it would be more advantageous to the young man to be placed in an office where he might meet with more extensive practice.

Amongst the poems is one to the memory of poor Goddard, which probably would never have been written but for your suggestion.[1] How often do I think of that night when you first introduced that interesting youth to us! At this moment I see in my mind's eye the lighted *salon*, you in your great coat, and the two slender tall figures following you!

My brother says that you will probably like to have yourself a copy of the stanzas above-mentioned; and also you promised to seek an opportunity (if ever it should be composed) to send this tribute to poor Goddard's memory to his mother in America. [In Wordsworth's hand.] By no means read the poem to any verse-writer, or *magazine scribbler*.

[1] See *Elegiac Stanzas*, in "Memorials of a Tour in the Continent" (1820). *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VI, p. 372. — Ed.

Have you seen the Edinburgh magazine with the articles signed S. T. Coleridge? My brother has not; for he will not suffer it to come into his house, as you know; but we females *have*. We found the matter too dull to be read by us; mostly unintelligible, and think it cannot be Coleridge's.[1]

CCCLIX

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 4, 1821.

. . . I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification. My youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words "renegade," "apostate," etc., I should retort the charge upon them, and say, *You* have been deluded by *places* and *persons*, while I have stuck to *principles*. *I* abandoned France, and her rulers, when *they* abandoned the struggle for liberty, gave themselves up to tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking — which was perhaps an error — that it might have been avoided; but after Buonaparte had violated the independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and against the nation that could submit to be the instrument of such an outrage. Here it was that I parted, in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree united with

[1] H. C. Robinson had assured Dorothy Wordsworth in a letter to which this is a reply that the articles were Coleridge's. — Ed.

their adversaries, who were free from the delusion (such I must ever regard it) of Mr. Fox and his party, that a safe and honourable peace was practicable with the French nation, and that an ambitious conqueror like Buonaparte could be softened down into a commercial rival.

This is enough for foreign politics, as influencing my attachments.

There are three great domestic questions, viz. the liberty of the press, Parliamentary reform, and Roman Catholic concession, which, if I briefly advert to, no more need be said at present.

A free discussion of public measures through the press I deem the *only* safeguard of liberty; without it I have neither confidence in kings, parliaments, judges, or divines. They have all in their turn betrayed their country. But the press, so potent for good, is scarcely less so for evil; and unfortunately they who are misled and abused by its means are the persons whom it can least benefit. It is the fatal characteristic of their disease to reject all remedies coming from the quarter that has caused or aggravated the malady. I am *therefore* for vigorous restrictions; but there is scarcely any abuse that I would not endure, rather than sacrifice — or even endanger — this freedom.

When I was young — giving myself credit for qualities which I did not possess, and measuring mankind by that standard — I thought it derogatory to human nature to set up property in preference to person, as a title for legislative power. That notion has vanished. I now perceive many advantages in our present complex system of representation, which formerly eluded my observation. This has tempered my ardour for reform; but if any plan could be contrived for throwing the representation fairly into the hands of the property of the country, and not

leaving it so much in the hands of the large proprietors as it now is, it should have my best support; though even in that event there would be a sacrifice of personal rights, independent of property, that are now frequently exercised for the benefit of the community.

Be not startled when I say that I am averse to further concessions to the Roman Catholics. My reasons are, that such concessions will not produce harmony among the Roman Catholics themselves; that those among them who are most clamorous for the measure care little about it but as a step, first, to the overthrow of the Protestant establishment in Ireland, as introductory to a separation of the two countries — their ultimate aim. . . . Deeming the Church establishment not only a fundamental part of our Constitution, but one of the greatest upholders and propagators of civilisation in our own country, and, lastly, the most effectual and main support of religious toleration, I cannot but look with jealousy upon measures which must reduce her relative influence, unless they be accompanied with arrangements, more adequate than any yet adopted, for the preservation and increase of that influence, to keep pace with the other powers in the community.

CCCLX

William Wordsworth to Francis Wrangham

[Undated.]

[He referred to the efforts of a society to distribute copies of the Christian Scriptures, which he cordially approved of, but added] As to the *indirect* benefits expected from it, as producing a golden age of unanimity among Christians, all that I think fume and emptiness;

nay, far worse. So deeply am I persuaded that discord and artifice, and pride and ambition would be fostered by such an approximation and unnatural alliance of sects, that I am inclined to think the evil thus produced would more than outweigh the good done by dispersing the Bibles. . . .

CCCLXI

Mary Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 28th, [1821.]

My dear Sir,

I have been waiting for your address for some time to tell you that Fleming's house at the bottom of the hill is vacated, and that I have a promise of the refusal, and therefore want your directions about it. Under existing circumstances I suspect that I am not to have the pleasure of taking it for you, but I must hear this from yourself before I give up my claim. Tillbrooke some time ago mentioned your *wise intentions* to us, which we had before half suspected; indeed Sarah bids me tell you that she was always sure "you were *in love*," and that it was you, and not your brother (as you cunningly hinted), that was to become a married man. That your happiness may go *beyond* your anticipations is the sincere wish of all your friends under Nab Scar, who by the bye want no packages from Twining's to remind them of you, and your brother, and of the days of particular pleasure that you passed among them. That season has been long gone by, and Rydal Mount is now as notorious for its industry as at that time it was for its idleness. The poet has been busily engaged upon subjects connected with our

Continental journey, and if you have leisure and inclination to call upon Mr. Monkhouse, 34 Gloster Place, you have permission to ask for a perusal of certain poems in his possession. He was charged not to give copies, and for obvious reasons you would not wish for an exception in your case. You will also see another *late production* in Gloster Place, which will be shown, I doubt not, with no little pride. Miss W. is going on with her journal, which will be ready to *go to press* interspersed with her brother's poems, I hope before you return. I do not say this *seriously*, but we sometimes jestingly talk of raising a fund by such means for a second, and a further, trip into Italy! . . .

CCCLXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

A thousand thanks for your interesting letter, this moment arrived. Luckily the enclosed was detained, or I should not have been able to have told you how much pleasure yours has given us; yet we have been greatly shocked with the sad news of Mary Lamb's recent attack. It must have been *before* the death of her brother, and the awakening to that sorrow how very dismal. Your account of Charles is just what we expected. And are those articles *really* Coleridge's? It was much more pleasant to me to accuse the Blackwoodites of having libelled him than to believe that he had really been a contributor to the magazine. Besides there seems to me to be a perplexity (and even a poverty often) in the *style*, which do not belong to Coleridge. His matter is, God knows, often obscure enough to unlearned readers like me.

My brother very often talks of you, and of our tours with you. He has laid no Irish scheme as yet, but most likely you will hear of one.

Your account of William[1] gives great delight to all, yet we are hungering after tidings of the beginning of painstaking at his books.

God bless you! Believe me, your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXIII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[Date unknown, possibly 1821.]

. . . A rule which I have inexorably adhered to prevents me from complying with the request you make. . . . My determination has been thus far to have no connection with any periodical publication. If ever I set it aside, it will be probably in the instance of the *Retrospective Review*,[2] which if it kept to its title would stand apart from contemporary literature and the injurious feelings which are too apt to mix with the critical part of it. I am, sir,

Very sincerely your obliged servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The poet's son.—Ed.

[2] Published from 1820 to 1854.—Ed.

1822

CCCLXIV

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[Date unknown.]

. . . You will probably see Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*. Tell him from me, if you think proper, that every true-born Englishman disallows the pretensions of the *Review* to the character of a faithful defender of the institutions of the country, while it leaves that infamous publication, *Don Juan*, unbranded. I do not mean by a formal critique, for it is not worth it —it would also tend to keep it in memory—but by some decisive words of reprobation, both as to the damnable tendency of such works, and as to the despicable quality of the powers requisite for their production.

What avails it to hunt down Shelley and leave Byron untouched? I am persuaded that *Don Juan* will do more harm to the English character than anything of our time; not so much as a book, but thousands, who will be ashamed to have it in that shape, will fatten upon choice bits of it in the shape of extracts. . . .

CCCLXV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

[Postmark, KENDAL, 16th Jan., 1822.]

My dearest Friend,

. . . William and I have walked daily through all the stormy season. . . . William has written some beautiful poems in remembrance of our late tour. . . . He never wrote anything that was more delightful. He began (as in connection with my *Recollections of a Tour in Scotland*) with saying, "I will write some poems for your journal," and I thankfully received two or three of them as a tribute to the journal, which I was making from memoranda taken in our last summer's journey on the Continent; but his work has grown to such importance (and has continued growing) that I have long ceased to consider it in connection with my own narrative of events unimportant, and lengthy descriptions. . . . The poems are as good as a descriptive tour, without describing . . . The *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, meanwhile, are at rest. . . .

CCCLXVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

3d March, 1822.

My dear Friend,

It is fit that I should begin with my reason for writing to you on the very day of the receipt of your letter, that you may not be afflicted with the thought that you had no sooner cast a burthen off your shoulders than another was ready to be cast *upon* them. It is very unfair in correspondence for one party, in the first motions of

gratitude for pleasure received, to write off immediately; but indeed it is a species of selfishness of which I confess I have been too often guilty. . . . I can only say that whenever your letters come, sooner or later, they are joyfully received and highly prized; the oftener the better, but however seldom and however slowly, we are never inclined to think ourselves neglected or ill-used. My brother will, I hope, write to Charles Lamb in the course of a few days. He has long talked of doing it; but you know how the mastery of his own thoughts (when engaged in composition, as he has lately been) often prevents him from fulfilling his best intentions; and since the weakness of his eyes has returned, he has been obliged to fill up all spaces of leisure by going into the open air for refreshment and relief. We are thankful that the inflammation (chiefly in the lids) is now much abated. It concerns us very much to hear so indifferent an account of Lamb and his sister. The death of their brother I have no doubt has affected them much more than the death of any brother, with whom there had — in near neighbourhood — been so little personal or family communication would have affected other minds. We deeply lamented their loss, and wished to write to them as soon as we heard of it; but it not being the particular duty of any one of us, — and a painful task, — we shoved it off, for which we are truly sorry, and very much blame ourselves. They are too good, and too confiding, to take it unkindly; and that thought makes me feel it the more.

Sergeant Rough was an intimate friend of my brother Christopher[1] at college. I used to hear him much

[1] William Rough (1772–1838), a contemporary of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Christopher Wordsworth at Cambridge, and one of the projectors of the *University Magazine* of 1795. He became a

spoken of, but never saw him. Poor man! his lot in this world has been a hard one — a thoughtless wife, and an undermining friend — what sorer evils can beset a man! Your affecting comment upon his death reminded me of a sonnet of my brother's on the subject of ruined abbeys,[1] which I will not quote as you will so soon have an opportunity of reading the sonnet among the *Ecclesiastical Sketches*. The thought in that part to which I allude is taken from George Dyer's *History of Cambridge*.

With respect to the tour poems I am afraid you will think his notes not sufficiently copious. Prefaces he has none, except to the poem on Goddard's death. Your suggestion of the bridge at Lucerne set his mind to work; and if a happy mood comes on, he is determined even yet, though the work is printed, to add a poem on that subject. You can have no idea with what earnest pleasure he seized the idea; yet, before he began to write at all, when he was pondering over his recollections, and asking me for hints and thoughts, I mentioned that very subject, and he then thought he could make nothing of it. You certainly have the gift of setting him on fire. When I named (before your letter was read to him) your scheme for next autumn, his countenance flushed with pleasure, and he exclaimed, "I'll go with him"; and then I ventured to utter a thought, which had risen before and been suppressed in the moment of its rising! "How *I* should like to go." Presently, however, the conversation took a sober turn, — my "unlawful desires" were completely

barrister at the Inner Temple, and was afterwards Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Ceylon, where he died. He wrote several volumes of verse, dramas, and miscellaneous poems. — Ed.

[1] See "Old Abbeys," No. xxxv, Part III of the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*. — Ed.

checked, — and he concluded that for him the journey would be impossible; "and then," said he, "if you, or Mary, or both, were not with me, I should not half enjoy it, — and *that* (so soon again) is impossible."

We have had a letter from Mr. Monkhouse to-day. He talks of taking a house in the neighbourhood of London; but as they had once an idea of coming into Lancashire, — which circumstances in Mr. Horrock's family have prevented, — we can see no reason why they should not, instead, take lodgings for the spring, and early part of the summer, in this neighbourhood; and Miss Hutchinson has written to them to that effect. It will be a pity if the circumstance of having already taken a house should prevent our having the pleasure of having them as neighbours. The Quillinans have taken Mr. Tillbrook's house, and will be settled there in about a fortnight. They are at present at Lancaster. . . . We are exceedingly sorry that the Gees are gone entirely from Rydal. No neighbours could have been kinder or better suited to us, in age and all other respects. Poor Mrs. Gee was called away a fortnight ago to attend the sick-bed of one of her sisters, and the next week Mr. Gee followed her to be present at the sister's funeral. They had before taken a house at Keswick; but they are so loth to leave the neighbourhood, and us, that they are determined to be at Ambleside instead of Keswick, and to get rid of their house there.

We have had a long and interesting letter from Mrs. Clarkson, with an account of the manners, characters, habits, etc., of the sable Queen, and her daughters. Notwithstanding bad times Mrs. C. writes in cheerful spirits, and talks of coming into the north this summer; and we really hope it will not end in *talk*, as Mr. Clarkson joins

with her; and if he once determines, a trifle will not stop him. Pray read a paper in the *London Magazine* by H. Coleridge on the "Uses of the Heathen Mythology in Poetry."[1] It has pleased us very much. The style is wonderful, for so young a man; so little of effort and no affectation. Poor Coleridge! have you seen his advertisement for pupils?[2] How beautifully Charles Lamb speaks of Grays Inn gardens, and his meeting with the old actor there.

Miss Hutchinson has just reminded me that you are now on the circuit. Perhaps I might have something to add before your return; but, as a letter is safe, and off my mind, when put into the post office, — and it will keep very well, and be ready to welcome you when you return to your solitary chambers, — I will e'en send it off. At that time you may have more leisure than at any other, to read — perhaps I ought to say decipher — my scrawling. I hope the poems will then be published; but if not, you must not indulge the hope of finding the "Bridge of Lucern" among them. I do not think that work can be accomplished in time, much as my brother would wish it; but you may depend upon it that something will come of your suggestion.

[1] This article appeared in Vol. V, p. 113, of the *London Magazine*. — Ed.

[2] The following paragraph appeared in ordinary type, not as an advertisement, in *The Courier* of Monday evening, Feb. 25, 1822. "Mr. Coleridge proposes to devote a determinate portion of each week to a small and select number of gentlemen not younger than 19 or 20, for the purpose of assisting them in the formation of their minds and the regulation of their studies. The plan, which is divided between direct instruction and conversation, the place, and other particulars may be learnt by personal application to Mr. Coleridge at Highgate." — Ed.

My sister says, "Mind you thank Mr. Robinson a hundred times for his kindness to Willy." Poor little fellow! he will certainly I think be removed from the Charter-house, but my brother is undecided in the choice of another school. We have every reason to be dissatisfied with his late progress; rather I should say we are satisfied he has made no progress at all in learning. All join in kind remembrances. Remember, when you happen to have half an hour's leisure, we shall always be glad to hear from you. You must think nothing of what I have said of my brother's longings to roam with you among the Tyrolese. It will be quite impossible, I am sure. God bless you. Believe me,

Your grateful and affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

The transcript of my journal is nearly finished. There is so much of it that I am sure it will be dull reading to those who have never been in those countries; and, even to such, I think much of it at least must be tedious. My brother is interested when I read it to him. So are the young ones; but they have not been much tried. My sister, too, never complains of over much, but that is because the subject is so interesting to her. When we meet, you shall read as much, or as little, of my journal as you like. I long to try it on you and Mr. Monkhouse! Mary seems to have succeeded so well in the brief way[1] that I can hardly hope my lengthiness will interest in like degree. I shall not read hers till my transcript is finished.

[1] A reference to Mrs. Wordsworth's shorter chronicle of the tour. — Ed.

When you next write pray sign your name at full length. This I particularly request for the settling of a dispute among us.

CCCLXVII

William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp

RYDAL MOUNT, April 16, [Postmark, 1822.]

My dear Sir,

I took the liberty of sending you the *Memorials*, for everything of this sort *is* a liberty (inasmuch as, to use Gibbon's phrase, it levies a tax of civility upon the receiving party), as a small acknowledgment of the great advantage I and my fellow-travellers had derived from your directions; which — as you might observe by the order in which the poems are placed, and the limits of our tour — we almost literally followed. The *Ecclesiastical Sketches* were offered to your notice merely as a contemporary publication. It gratifies me that you think well of these poems; but, I own, I am disappointed that they should have afforded you less pleasure than a single piece, which, from the very nature of it, as allegorical, and even imperfectly so, would horrify a German critic; and, whatever may be thought of the Germans as poets, there is no doubt of their being the best critics in Europe. But I think I have hit upon the secret. You, like myself, are — as Smollett says in his translation of the French phrase — no longer a chicken; and your heart beat in recollection of your late glorious performance, which has ranked you as a demigod among tourists —

> Mounting from glorious deed to deed,
> As thou from clime to clime didst lead.

You recollect that Gray, in one of his letters, affirms that description, — he means of natural scenery and the operations of Nature, — though an admirable ornament, ought *never* to be the subject of poetry. How many exclusive dogmas have been laid down, which genius from age to age has triumphantly refuted! and grossly should I be deceived if, speaking freely to you as an old friend, these local poems do not contain many proofs that Gray was as much in the wrong in this interdict, as any critical brother who may have framed his canons without a spark of inspiration or poetry to guide him. . . .

The *Ecclesiastical Sketches* labour under one obvious disadvantage, that they can only present themselves as a whole to the reader, who is pretty well acquainted with the history of this country; and, as separate pieces, several of them suffer as poetry from the matter of fact, there being unavoidably in all history — except as it is a mere suggestion — something that enslaves the fancy. But there are in those poems several continuous strains, not in the least degree liable to this objection. I will only mention two: the sonnets on *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*, and almost the whole of the last part, from the picture of England after the Revolution, scattered over with Protestant churches, till the conclusion. Pray read again from "Open your Gates, ye everlasting Piles" to the end, and then turn to your *Enterprise*. Has the Continent driven the North out of your estimation? . . .

I have in the press a little book on the Lakes, containing some illustrative remarks on Swiss scenery. If I have fallen into any errors, I know no one better able to correct them than yourself, and should the book (which I must mention is chiefly a *re*publication) meet your eye, pray point out to me the mistakes. The part relating to

Switzerland is new. One favour leads often to the asking of another. May I beg of you a sketch for a tour in North Wales? It is thirty years since I was in that country, and new ways must have been opened up since that time. . . .

CCCLXVIII

William Wordsworth to Viscount Lowther

RYDAL MOUNT, 19th April, 1822.

My dear Lord Lowther,

It is a long time since any communication passed between us. Nothing has occurred in this neighbourhood which was likely to interest you. The "hardness of the times" — a phrase with which you must be pretty well tired — urges me to mention to you a case in which I am not a little interested, and Mrs. Wordsworth still more so, as the party is her brother. To come at once to the point. In the wide circle of your acquaintance, does any one want a land agent of mature experience in agriculture, and who can be recommended as a thoroughly conscientious and honourable man, of excellent temper and mild manners. Mr. Thomas Hutchinson — the person in question — was brought up to farming, under his uncle Mr. Hutchinson of Sockburn, in Durham, — a person of much note as being a principal teacher of the improvements in breeding cattle, for which Durham and the adjoining part of Yorkshire have become so famous. About 1808, knowing that Wales was backward in agriculture, he took a farm, under Mr. Frankland Lewes in Radnorshire, and since that period has been a leading agriculturist in that quarter, to its great improvement;

but I am sorry to say that he has suffered from the change of times, to such a degree that his private fortune of not less than £14,000 has been so reduced as to determine him to retire from farming, if he can find a situation such as I have named.

During the first years of his lease, which was fourteen years, he sunk large sums in improvements; and when he looked for his return, the "times changed"; and notwithstanding his judgment, his prudence, and his care, he must have gone to ruin, if it had not been for his private resources. Mr. Lewes, who I remember said in Parliament, in speaking against the Corn-Bill, that *he* was prepared to reduce his rents, has constantly refused to do so in this case; or to relinquish the lease till now, when it is nearly expired. He had a fat tenant, and has kept him by force, till he is becoming lean as a church-mouse. Mr. Lewes conditionally remitted the landlord the amount of income tax, when the property tax was abolished.

I must add, that I have known Mr. Hutchinson from his childhood, and therefore can speak confidently to his moral merits, his daily habits, and the soundness of his principles as a good subject; and am certain that he is not reduced to this situation by any fault of his own. He is forty-seven years of age, prudently did not marry early in life. His eldest child is about eight years of age; he has still enough left for his own needs, but he is naturally anxious for the sake of his children.

You will excuse this long story; but, if you should have an opportunity of serving this excellent man in the way in which he wishes to be, he would prove an invaluable servant. . . .

CCCLXIX

William Wordsworth to Walter Savage Landor

RYDAL MOUNT, April 20th, [1822.]

My dear Sir,

I am surprised, and rather sorry, when I hear you say you read little, because you are removed from the pressure of the trash, which, hourly issuing from the press in England, tends to make the very name of writing books disgusting. I am so situated as to see little of it, but one cannot stop one's ears, and I sometimes envy you that distance which separates you altogether from this intrusion. . . . We have as a near neighbour an old acquaintance of yours, Mr. Quillinan, who knew you at Bath. He was lately of the Third Dragoon Guards, but has retired on half-pay. He married a daughter of Sir Egerton Brydges, and they live, with two nice children, at the foot of our hill. He begs to be kindly remembered to you.

In respect to Latin poetry, I ought to tell you that I am no judge, except upon general principles. I never practised Latin verse, not having been educated at one of the public schools. My acquaintance with Virgil, Horace, Lucretius, and Catullus is intimate; but as I never read them with a critical view to composition, great faults in language might be committed which would escape my notice. Any opinion of mine, therefore, on points of classical nicety would be of no value, should I be so inconsiderate as to offer it. A few days ago, being something better in my sight, I read your *Sponsalia.* It is full of spirit and animation, and is probably of that style of versification which suits the subject; yet, if you thought proper, you could produce, I think, a richer harmony; and I met some serious inaccuracies in the

punctuation. . . . I must express a wish, however, that you would gratify us by writing in English. There are noble and stirring things in all that you have written in your native tongue, and that is enough for me. In your *Simonidea*, which I saw some years ago at Mr. Southey's, I was pleased to find rather an out-of-the-way image, in which the present hour is compared to the shade on the dial. It is a singular coincidence, that in the year 1793, when I first became an author, I illustrated the sentiment precisely in the same manner. In the same work you commend the fine conclusion of Russel's sonnet upon Philoctetes, and depreciate that form of composition. I do not wonder at this. I used to think it egregiously absurd, though the greatest poets since the revival of literature have written in it. Many years ago my sister happened to read to me the sonnets of Milton, which I could at that time repeat; but somehow or other I was singularly struck with the style of harmony, and the gravity, and republican austerity of those compositions. In the course of the same afternoon I produced three sonnets, and soon after many others; since that time, and from want of resolution to take up anything of length, I have filled up many a moment in writing sonnets, which, if I had never fallen into the practice, might easily have been better employed. *The Excursion* is proud of your approbation. *The Recluse* has had a long sleep, save in my thoughts; my MSS. are so ill-penned and blurred that they are useless to all but myself; and at present I cannot face them. But if my stomach can be preserved in tolerable order, I hope you will hear of me again in the character chosen for the title of that poem. I am glad to hear from you. I remain faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCLXX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, April 21, [1822.]

My dear Friend,

If you have not seen Mr. Monkhouse before this reaches you, no doubt you will seek *him* out, or *he* you, ere another day passes over your heads; therefore I need not tell you any Rydal news. . . . We were truly sorry, as you may believe, to part with him so soon, and for *his* sake as well as our own; for he is leaving this country just at the time when he, being an ardent and very successful angler, would find the most pleasure here. I wish very much for that reason, that his stay had been now rather than in the autumn. Besides, "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." We know not what may happen to prevent his fulfilling his present scheme of returning hither. However, having taken a house exactly to his wife's mind and his own is a good security that nothing but necessity will turn him aside. Mrs. Monkhouse will be our neighbour at the foot of the hill, so that she will not find her situation lonely. . . .

No doubt you are as busy as possible, yet I have been unreasonable enough not to expect to hear from you, but often to think to myself, "Perhaps there may be a letter from Mr. Robinson to-day!" . . . If you had been a formal person, but I am glad you are not, and (as poor Coleridge used to say) I "like you the better there*fore*," you certainly would have written after having looked over the *Memorials* (finding yourself one of the dedicatees) to express your sense of the high honour. . . . Seriously, I should like to know how you like the whole

volume,[1] *which* poems you like best, and what you do *not* like; if any . . . and my brother wishes, too, to know if the *Desultory Stanzas*[2] have given you pleasure, as they were inspired by your letter. . . .

It is generally supposed that Longman has an interest in the *Literary Gazette.* Do you know whether he actually has, or has not? If he has, he has used my brother very ill by suffering his *Ecclesiastical Sketches* and *Memorials* to be reviewed by a person who could give such a *senseless* criticism. Besides, a sacrifice is made of W. Wordsworth to obtain for the *Literary Gazette* the reputation of impartiality. This is clearly the object of the criticism, as is plain from the last paragraph of the review of the *Memorials;* wherein the writer declares that that journal proves its impartiality by censuring without reserve those whom he is pleased to call the heads of their several schools, when they write such stuff as Mr. W. has now given to the public. . . . It would not have been worth while to have said so much about so despicable a criticism, if it were not on account of my brother's connection with Longman. We should not otherwise have given it a thought, after the trifling vexation that such an opinion of the poems should even have *preceded* their publication, robbing us of the little profit which might have arisen from the first sale — the only profit which could be expected from these little volumes. . . .

We had a letter from my brother Christopher a few days ago. He is in excellent health and good spirits, but so busy that he has hardly time to think of his own affairs, and cannot yet say whether it will be in his power

[1] The *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* (1822). — Ed.
[2] The last poem in the *Memorials.*— Ed.

to come into the north this summer. We expect the Clarksons in a few weeks. . . .

My brother is anxious to know what your plans are for the autumn, not that there is the smallest chance of his benefiting by them; but being so fond of travelling himself, he sympathizes with you in all your hopes and schemes, in that line. His eyes are better, yet almost useless for reading. I think he will satisfy himself this summer with a little tour not far from home. . . . We had an interesting letter from Charles Lamb not long ago. Pray mention him and his sister when you write; but I fear you do not see them often, as they are so much in the country. How is poor Barry Cornwall? I mean Mr. Proctor. When I asked the question I had forgotten that it was not his true name. We were very sorry to hear of his illness. The Montagus, I doubt not, are very kind to him. Miss Hutchinson, a determined French scholar, is puzzling over her lesson beside me, and every two minutes she asks me the meaning of a word. She gets on admirably, without having studied a word of the grammar, and will very soon be a fluent translator, stimulated by the hope, at some time or other, of travelling on the Continent, and being able at least to make her wants known on French ground. She begs her kind regards to you. My sister, were she here, would send her love. Adieu. Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

D. Wordsworth.

CCCLXXI

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

RYDAL MOUNT, June 12th, 1822.
[Postmark, June 21, 1822.]

Dear Sir,

. . . Mrs. W. begs you to be so kind as to mention to Mr. C. that the more she is familiar with the bust the more she likes it, which is the case with all my family. As to my own opinion, it can be of little value as to the likeness, but as a work of fine art, I may be excused if I say that it seems to me fully entitled to that praise which is universally given to Mr. Chantrey's labours.

The state of my eyes for a long time has only allowed me to read books of large print. . . . I have not yet been able to make myself acquainted with more than a few of the first scenes of your drama,[1] one of your ballads, and the songs. I am therefore prevented from accompanying my thanks with those notices which to an intelligent author give such an acknowledgment its principal value. The songs appear to me full as good as those of Burns, with the exception of a *very* few of his best; and *The Mermaid* is wild, tender, and full of spirit. The little I have seen of the play I liked, especially the speeches of the spirits, and that of Macgee, page 7. I hope, in a little time, to be acquainted with the rest of the volume. . . .

I remain, dear sir, very sincerely yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

[1] *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell* (1822). — Ed.

CCCLXXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

13th June, 1822.

. . . The accident[1] might have been terrible. Had the horse been one inch nearer the wall, his death would have been inevitable. The sharp stone, which gave a grazing side cut to the skull, would have penetrated into the head. . . . It happened, not at Haweswater, but about two miles on this side of Bampton. My brother had kind and judicious friends at hand. He was removed to Dr. Scatterthwaite's, and very soon after he reached that quiet comfortable house, Dr. Harrison arrived.

CCCLXXIII

William Wordsworth to William Pearson

1st August, 1822.

Dear Sir,

The weather having been so bad, you will scarcely have set out on your tour, therefore I hope these few notes will be in time to be of service to you.

We were pleased with the vale of Nith. The ruins of Lincluden Abbey or Priory are near Dumfries, on the road up the vale; but little of them remains. Drumlanrig, the mansion of the late Duke of Queensberry, which is a long way up the vale, we did not see — turning off to Leadhills, a village inhabited by miners; thence nothing interesting to Lanark; at Lanark, falls of the Clyde and Mr. Owen's establishment.[2] Beautiful country to

[1] To her brother. — Ed.

[2] A spinning factory founded by Robert Owen, the communist, in behalf of his workers. — Ed.

Hamilton, where in the duke's palace is a fine collection of pictures. Thence to Bothwell Castle, Glasgow, Dumbarton, Loch Lomond, Luss, fine view of the islands of Loch Lomond from the top of Inchtavannach, Tarbet, Arrochar, Glen Croe, Inverary, Kilchurn Castle on Loch Awe, very striking; Dalmally. Thence we went to Loch Etive, to Portnacrosk on Loch Linnhe, interesting all the way up to Ballachulish; from hence we went up Glen Coe and back to B——. Glen Coe very sublime. By Fort William, Fort Augustus to the Fall of Foyers, very fine; and so on to Inverness, from whence, fifteen miles north to some beautiful saw mills upon the river Bewley, the scenery of which is very romantic.

Homeward, by the main coach-road to Blair Athole; a little before reaching it you cross the stream of Bruar below the water-falls, — interesting on Burns's account, — Killicrankie and Fascally on the way to Dunkeld, very striking; Dunkeld also interesting. The narrow glen,[1] a pleasing solitude. I have omitted Killin at the head of Loch Tay and the Trossachs, as they lie in the country between the two main roads; but the Trossachs are very fine, and Killin a striking situation. By Stirling to Edinburgh; I have nothing more to say, unless I mention Perth, which lies low, in a beautiful valley.

The letter you sent to the *Gazette* was just the thing, and I hope would produce some effect. Wishing you fine weather and a pleasant journey,

I remain, dear sir,

With very sincere regard, yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

[1] "The Sma Glen," between Dunkeld and Crieff. In the *Memorials of a Tour in Scotland* (1803), Wordsworth called it, and his poem, *Glen Almain*, or "the narrow glen." — Ed.

CCCLXXIV

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

LOWTHER CASTLE, [Sept. 16, 1822.]

My dear Rogers,

It gave me great pleasure to hear from our common friend, Sharp, that you had returned from the Continent in such excellent health, which I hope you will continue to enjoy in spite of our fogs, rains, east-winds, coal fires, and other clogs upon light spirits and free breathing. I have long wished to write to you on a little affair of my own, or rather of my sister's, and the facility of procuring a frank in this house has left my procrastinating habit without excuse. Some time ago you expressed (as perhaps you will remember) a wish that my sister would publish her recollections of her Scotch tour, and you interested yourself so far in the scheme as kindly to offer to assist in disposing of it to a publisher for her advantage. We know that your skill and experience in these matters are great, and she is now disposed to profit by them, provided you continue to think as favourably of the measure as heretofore. The fact is, she was so much gratified by her tour in Switzerland that she has a strong wish to add to her knowledge of that country, and to extend her ramble to some part of Italy. As her own little fortune is not sufficient to justify a step of this kind, she has no hope of revisiting those countries, unless an adequate sum could be procured through the means of this MS. You are now fairly in possession of her motives; if you still think that the publication would do her no discredit, and are of opinion that a respectable sum of money might be had for it (which she has no chance of effecting except through your exertion) she would be much obliged,

as I also should be, if you would undertake to manage the bargain, and the MS. shall be sent you as soon as it is revised. She has further to beg that you would be so kind as to look it over, and strike out what you think might be better omitted.

I detected you in a small collection of poems entitled *Italy* which we all read with much pleasure. *Venice*, and *The Brides of Venice* (they were the titles, I think), please as much as any; some parts of the *Venice* are particularly fine. I had no fault to find, except too strong a leaning to the pithy and concise, and to some peculiarities of versification which occur perhaps too often. . . . Believe me, my dear Rogers,

Faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCLXXV

William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp

October 3, 1822.

My dear Sir,

I hope you will not think that I trespass too much upon your friendly disposition when I beg that, if it should be necessary, you would take some little trouble on my account in a money transaction. We have lodged nearly £2000 of our little fortune in the French funds, but having no reliance on the good faith of that government, I am anxious, in case its stability should receive a shock, to sell out with expedition; which, residing at such a distance from town as I do, would be impossible, unless some friend would interest himself on my account. . . .

I have had a kind letter from Rogers in answer to mine about my sister's publication. He proffers every assistance, but is strongly against my proposal to sell the copyright at once. If you happen to see him shortly, say that my sister is at present in Scotland; and that, as soon as she returns, we will write to him.

During these last three weeks we have had a glorious season, such a one as scarcely occurs in seven years. Would that you and Rogers had been here to enjoy it. Even he could not have regretted Italy, and I am sure you would not.

We hope that your sister was benefited by her tour. With best regards from Mrs. Wordsworth,

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

RYDAL MOUNT, Wednesday, October 24th, [1822.]

My dear Friend,

. . . At the end of my letter I *must* copy a parody (which I hope will make you laugh), that William and Sarah threw off last Sunday afternoon. They had been talking of Mr. Clarkson's kindness to every human being, especially of his perseverance in the *African* cause, and of his last act of kindness to the distressed negro widow and her family. Tender thoughts of merriment came with the image of the sable princess by your fireside. The first stanza of Ben Jonson's poem slipped from William's lips

in a parody, and together they finished it with much loving fun. Oh! how they laughed! I heard them in my room upstairs, and wondered what they were about; and, when it was finished, I claimed the privilege of sending it to you. . . . Ben Jonson's poem begins "Queen and huntress chaste and fair." You *must* know it.

Queen and negress chaste and fair!
 Christophe now is laid asleep
Seated in a British chair.
State in humbler manner keep
 Shine for Clarkson's pure delight
 Negro princess, ebon bright!

Let not "Willy's"[1] holy shade
 Interpose at envy's call,
Hayti's shining queen was made
To illumine Playford hall,
 Bless it then with constant light,
 Negress excellently bright!

Lay thy diadem apart,
 Pomp has been a sad deceiver.
Through thy champion's faithful heart
Joy be poured, and thou the giver,
 Thou that mak'st a day of night
 Sable princess, ebon bright.

[1] Mrs. Wilberforce calls her husband by that pretty diminutive "Willy." You must have heard her. D. W.

CCCLXXVII

William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp

RYDAL MOUNT, November 12, [1822.]

My dear Sir,

. . . Dorothy is at Stockton upon Tees. She will be consulted by letter upon your obliging offer, of which I know she will be duly sensible.

My sister returned from Scotland a few days since. . . . She went from Edinburgh to Stirling by water, thence to Glasgow, chiefly by the track-boat, thence to Dumbarton and to Rob Roy's Caves, and Tarbet by the steamboat, to Inveraray by land, and returned to Glasgow by steam; coming home by Lanark, etc. She has made notes of her tour, which are very amusing, particularly as a contrast to the loneliness of her former mode of travelling.

I was not aware how much I was asking when I requested you to undertake my little concern in the French funds, or I should not have ventured to make the proposal. I knew indeed that everybody must be averse to incur such a responsibility, but was encouraged to hope that your confidence — that, whatever the result proved, I should not complain, but should be content — would do away much of your dislike in my particular case. On carefully referring to your letter I feel myself not justified in expressing the wish that you should act for me. At present I have only to say that I should be willing to stand a few of the depressions of the French funds, even if considerable, provided I could feel assured that the French government would honestly abide by its engagements. I am not anxious for profit, by selling in and out; or desirous to have the command of my money.

All I look for, for some years to come, is the regular payment of good interest which I now have. Were I to take the money out, I should not know what to do with it. After stating this, as the principal point I look to, and the only one to me of great importance, I may add that I should be perfectly contented to have my cock-boat tied to your seventy-four. If *you* thought it advisable to sell out, so should I. Therefore should *you* see reason to change, I have only to beg that you will be so kind as to let me know. . . .

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[Dec. 21, 1822.]

My dear Friend,

Disappointment often follows hope long deferred. Not so in our case, when your promised letter arrived; which did, and *does*, interest us much more than you could possibly imagine, when you kindly took so much trouble for us. It has had many readings; and is not yet laid up among our records; but will for some time be kept out for reference and re-perusal. You do not say you intend a second part; but that hint at the last, that you could fill another letter with what you saw, and observed, of the people (no doubt including many adventures, characteristic both of you and of them), set our greedy desires at work. We are not unreasonable enough to ask the favour; but if you could find leisure, and could make of it a pleasant task, it would render this — your delightful sketch of cities, towns, ruins, and scenery — quite complete. I have had many a transient wish that we could have been with you — and exclaimed to my brother,

"Nay, had *I* been there" i.e. at Grenoble, "no weather should have deterred him — we *would* have seen the Grande Chartreuse"; but *he* interposed to check my boasting, with the irrevocable decree that no female is to tread on that sacred ground. Seriously, however, my brother is very sorry that you should have missed the Chartreuse. I do not think that any one spot which he visited, during his youthful travels with Robert Jones, made so great an impression on his mind; and, in my young days, he used to talk so much of it to me, that it was a great disappointment when I found that the Chartreuse was not to come into our tour. We were all mortified that you turned away from the Pyrenees, yet the reason was quite sufficient, — being alone; not that perhaps you would have been safer with a companion, but you would have thought less of danger, and most likely none would have reached you; though in the unsettled state of the country, with the recent provocation you mention, you probably made a wiser choice than you might have done, under the temptation of pleasant company. As to Italy, I do not so much lament that you did not go thither, for perhaps the scheme we have so often talked of may at some time be accomplished; and then we shall once again be fellow-travellers. . . .

As you are so much interested in the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, William will send you hereafter a poem which he has just written upon the foundation of a church which Lady Fleming is about to erect at Rydal.[1] It is about eighty lines. I like it much.

My brother, who is now beside me, desires sincere remembrances. He tells me that he sympathises with

[1] *To the Lady Fleming, on seeing the Foundation preparing for the Erection of Rydal Chapel, Westmoreland.* — Ed.

you entirely in what you say respecting the interference of France with Spain.

.

By self-devoted Moscow, by the blaze
Of that dread sacrifice, by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood,
The impassive elements no claim shall raise
To rob our human nature of his praise.
Enough was done and suffered, to insure
Final deliverance, absolute and pure;
Enough for faith, tracking the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice, his wrath unshroud,
And lay his justice bare to mortal eye;
He who, of yore, by miracle spake loud
As openly that purpose here avow'd,
Which only madness ventures to defy.[1]

[1] This sonnet may have been written soon after the retreat of Napoleon from Moscow in 1812, but more probably not till 1822; and it was not published till 1827. As the version given in this letter of Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson, in 1822, is very different from that which was subsequently printed by her brother, and as this sonnet was accidentally omitted from the Eversley edition of the poems, the text of 1832 may be given in a footnote.

By Moscow self-devoted to a blaze
Of dreadful sacrifice; by Russian blood
Lavished in fight with desperate hardihood;
The unfeeling elements no claim shall raise
To rob our human-nature of just praise
For what she did and suffered. Pledges sure
Of a deliverance absolute and pure
She gave, if faith might tread the beaten ways
Of Providence. But now did the Most High
Exalt his still small voice; to quell that host
Gathered his power, a manifest ally;
He, whose heaped waves confounded the proud boast
Of Pharaoh, said to Famine, Snow, and Frost,
"Finish the strife by deadliest victory!"
— Ed.

When you see Mr. Monkhouse you will read the sonnet to him, as it is always a treat for him to have a few verses from Rydal Mount. The guerilla sonnets must have been selected by the newspaper editor on account of the circumstances of the times. We had not seen, or heard of them. The French have stayed their hands, it is to be hoped, for the present; but whether they meddle or not, I think it is very likely that something more may come out of my brother in connexion with Spain; and certainly *will*, if they do, after all, send their armies across the Pyrenees. . . . We shall be delighted to see Elia's *Essays* collected in a book by themselves. I hope they will soon appear. Thank you for your good account of Miss Lamb. Pray give my kind love to her, and her brother. They will be glad to hear that Miss Hutchinson talks of going to London in the spring. She often speaks of the pleasure she shall have in seeing *them;* and, I assure you, she does not forget *you*, in numbering her London friends.

We have been much concerned at the recent accounts of Mrs. Monkhouse's state of health. I hope you see them as often as ever you can. There is no one so likely to cheer our good friend as yourself, when his spirits are sinking under anxiety during his wife's confinement to the sofa.

This is a sad dull letter in return for yours, and I am ashamed of blots, scrawling with a bad pen, etc., etc., ashamed indeed, after your legible penmanship, and to write so to YOU! who repaired my loss in the vale of Leuk with such a nice silver pen, which I still daily use! It is almost like ingratitude. We all join in wishing you as happy a coming year as the last, with your usual good health and spirits. God bless you! Believe me

Ever your faithful and affectionate friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXIX

William Wordsworth to Richard Sharp

[1822.]

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your kindness in meeting my wishes so promptly. Your view of the case appears quite just, but it is not probable that, if the present French ministers can keep their ground, the death of the king would prove less injurious to the credit of the government; as I understand that their system is approved of by the heir to the throne, and his friends. There is yet another reason for confidence,—the desire which the Continental Powers have to raise the credit of their funds, from the conviction that public credit enabled England principally to make such mighty exertions during the late war. Nevertheless, I know how difficult it is for unprincipled men to resist a temptation of present advantage for a remote benefit; and I regard the French as destitute of public principle.

I should be most happy to submit the whole of my little venture to your discretion; and with this view, I have requested Mr. Cookson to deposit the certificate in your hands, to sell out or leave in as you judge best, and I should be thankful for instructions how to vest you with the necessary powers, as something more I apprehend must be wanting.

You talked of going to the Continent in the spring. This morning the wind is blowing a perfect hurricane, tearing the leaves of the trees in myriads, so that the splendour of the autumn is destroyed. . . .

How singular is the fate of Fonthill![1] The papers give a sentimental and silly account of the place, but one cannot help longing to see it, with all its wonders!

With best regards from Mrs. Wordsworth, I remain,

Faithfully, your obedient friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXX

Mrs. Wordsworth to John Kenyon

[Probably 1822.]

My dear Sir,

Your friendly and very acceptable present arrived at Rydal Mount yesterday. I have not yet opened the cask, but doubt not that the sugar is in excellent condition; and it could not have come more opportunely than now, when we are threatened with a serious rise in the price of an article, which, as Christmas pies will ere long be called for, must be in great requisition. I lose no time in thanking you for this your kind remembrance; though, barren as a letter just now from me will be, I should have been loth to trouble you with one, had I not the temptation of procuring a frank, and probably an additional note from William, who is at present either at the house of the Member for Yorkshire, Mr. Marshall, or at Lowther.

W. is paying his last summer visits for this season; our latest lingerers after pleasure have departed. Miss Wordsworth we expect at home (she having been an absentee for ten months) in the course of the next fortnight; so that after the rejoicings for her return are

[1] Fonthill Abbey, in Wiltshire. — Ed.

over, we look forward to a quiet and industrious winter without any harassing fears that we are to be turned out of our favoured residence, a fear that haunted us — if I remember right — the last time I had the pleasure of writing to you.[1]

I can now look forward to the hope that, as soon as you like, after the cuckoo arrives, you will not let another season pass without introducing Mrs. Kenyon to us. If not, I shall begin to suspect that you think the influence of *Idle* Mount may interfere with, and have a bad effect upon, the more industrious habits of your good wife; and that you had best keep her out of the way of that castle of indolence.

[1] See the lines entitled *Composed when a Probability existed of our being obliged to quit Rydal Mount as a Residence. Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, p. 289. — Ed.

1823

CCCLXXXI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 3d, 1823.

My dear Sir,

As you have no doubt heard, by a message sent from my brother through Mr. Sharp, I happened to be in Scotland[1] when your letter arrived, where (having intended to be absent from home only a fortnight) I was detained seven weeks by the illness of my fellow traveller.[2] . . .

I cannot but be flattered by your thinking so well of my journal[3] as to recommend (indirectly at least) that I should not part with all power over it, till its fortune has been tried. You will not be surprised, however, that I am not so hopeful; and that I am apprehensive that, after having encountered the unpleasantness of coming before the public, I might not be assisted in attaining my object. I have, then, to ask whether a middle course be not possible, that is, whether your favourable opinion, confirmed perhaps by some other good judges, might not induce a bookseller to give a certain sum for the right to publish a given number of copies. In fact, I find it next to impossible to make up my mind to sacrifice my privacy for a

[1] In September and October, 1822. — Ed.

[2] Joanna Hutchinson. — Ed.

[3] *Journal of a Tour on the Continent* (1820). — Ed.

certainty *less* than two hundred pounds — a sum which would effectually aid me in accomplishing the ramble I so much, and I hope not unwisely, wish for.[1] . . .

I have nothing further to say, for it is superfluous to trouble you with my scruples, and the fears which I have that a work of such slight pretensions will be wholly overlooked in this writing and publishing — especially *tour*-writing and *tour*-publishing — age; and when factions and parties, literary and political, are so busy in endeavouring to stifle all attempts to interest, however pure from any taint of the world, and however humble in their claims.

My brother begs me to say that it gratified him to hear you were pleased with his late publications. In the *Memorials* he himself likes best the *Stanzas upon Einsiedeln*,[2] the *Three Cottage Girls*, and, above all, the *Eclipse upon the Lake of Lugano;* and, in the *Sketches* the succession of those on the Reformation, and those towards the conclusion of the third part. Mr. Sharp liked best the poem *To Enterprise*, which surprised my brother a good deal.[3] . . .

If you knew how much it has cost me to settle the affair of this proposed publication in my mind, as far as I have now done, I am sure you would deem me sufficiently excused for having so long delayed answering your most obliging letter. I have still to add, that if there be a prospect that any bookseller will undertake the publication,

[1] This journal was never published in full. Extracts from it will be found in the Eversley edition of *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, Vol. II, pp. 163–259. — Ed.

[2] This refers to the poem entitled *Composed in one of the Catholic Cantons.* — Ed.

[3] This poem was originally included in the *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* (1822); and afterwards placed amongst the *Poems of the Imagination.* — Ed.

I will immediately prepare a corrected copy to be sent to you, and I shall trust to your kindness for taking the trouble to look over it, and to mark whatever passages you may think too trivial for publication, or in any other respect much amiss. . . . Believe me, dear sir, yours gratefully and with sincere esteem,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXXII

Mary Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont

February 5th, 1823.

My dear Lady Beaumont,

I have delayed sending you the poem,[1] and also to reply to your last kind letter, in the hope of being able to speak decisively about the intended visit to Coleorton. . . .

Mrs. Coleridge and Sara have been some time at Highgate. She wrote soon after their arrival there, and gave a cheerful account of Coleridge. She spoke of going into Devonshire about the middle of March. We seldom see Hartley, but as we hear little of him, and that little in his favour, we hope he is spending his time to some good purpose; but as to the discipline of Mr. Dawes' school, that cannot much restrain him, as I believe there are not more than four boys. . . .

I hope the verses will afford you pleasure. Her ladyship wrote a very proper reply when they were sent to her; but how far they may have power to act as a "peace-offering" we much doubt, but heartily wish they may.[2]

[1] *To the Lady Fleming*, January, 1822. — Ed.

[2] There was some slight friction between the ladies at Rydal Hall and those at the Mount. — Ed.

The severe weather has put a stop to all progress with the work. If you or Sir George could send us any hints, or sketch for a chapel that would look well in this situation, it is possible that we could have it made useful — through her [1] agents. We are very anxious that nothing should be done to disfigure the village. They [2] might, good taste directing them, add much to its beauty. The site chosen is the orchard opposite the door leading to the lower waterfall. . . .

CCCLXXXIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

17th February, 1823.

My dear Sir,

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of thanking you for your last very kind letter, as Miss Hutchinson is going directly to London; and, through her, you will receive this. At present I shall do no more than assure you that I am fully sensible of the value of your friendly attention to the matter on which I have troubled you. I hope that my brother and sister will soon have the pleasure of meeting you in London, and he will explain to you all my scruples and apprehensions. . . .

My brother is glad that you came upon the stone to the memory of Aloys Reding [3] in such an interesting way. He and Mrs. W., without any previous notice, met with it at the moment of sunset, as described at the close of those stanzas. I was rambling in another part of the

[1] Lady Le Fleming's. — Ed.

[2] The Le Flemings. — Ed.

[3] See *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent*, No. XIII. — Ed.

wood and unluckily missed it. . . . I was delighted with your and your sister's reception at that pleasant house in the vale of Schwytz which I well remember. Mr. Monkhouse and I, going on foot to Brennen from Schwytz, were struck with the appearance of the house, and inquired to whom it belonged; were told, to a family of the name of Reding, but could not make out whether it had been the residence and birthplace of Aloys Reding or not. I am left at home with my niece and her brother William, now quite well. . . . Believe me to be, with great respect,

Yours very sincerely,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXXIV

Mary Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

TRINITY LODGE, May 5.
[Postmark, 1823.]

My dear Friend,

Then, on Saturday the 10th, God willing, we purpose to commence an attack upon your hospitality. W. will take the first Cambridge coach, and Dora and I shall follow with Dr. Wordsworth,[1] and hope to reach Bryanston Street in the course of the day. Indeed, the Dr. is engaged to dine in town. Therefore we shall not be long after W.; but do not disarrange your plans in expectation of us, as you know we are no great *dinnerites*, and would rather fall in at your *tea* hour than at any other. In hope of seeing you so soon, and having a host of letters to write,

[1] The Master of Trinity. — Ed.

I will say no more: only that we trust we are not to be disappointed in our expectation of seeing the dear Rotha. Love to sweet Mima, and believe me,

Ever affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXXV

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

LEE PRIORY, NEAR WINGHAM, KENT,
May 6th, 1823.

Dear Sir,

On my return to Gloucester Place I found your obliging present of your book, and the medallion of Sir Walter Scott, with both of which I was much pleased; both for their several sakes, and as marks of your attention. They are forwarded to Westmoreland; and in a day or two I quit this place for a trip, I hope of not more than three weeks, chiefly in Holland. If I return through London it will not be to stop twenty-four hours there. . . .

Very faithfully, your obliged servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCLXXXVI

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

LEE PRIORY, May 16th, [1823.]

My dear Friend,

Your very welcome letter followed me to this place. The account it gave of your happiness and comfort was such as we wished to hear. May the like blessings be

long, very long, continued to you, changing their character only according to the mildest influences of time! You gave me liberty to reply to your letter as might suit what you knew of my procrastinating disposition. I caught at this; but be assured you would have heard from me immediately if I could have held out any hopes, either to myself or you, that we should be able to accept of your kind invitation to visit you and Mrs. K. (with whom we should be most happy to become acquainted) at Bath. We came hither five weeks ago, meaning after a fortnight's stay to cross the Channel for a little tour in Flanders and Holland; but we had calculated, as the saying is, without our host. The spring was tardy and froward. When a day or two of fine weather came, they were followed by blustering, and even tempestuous, winds. These abated, and out came my own vernal enemy, inflammation in my eyes; and here I am, still obliged to employ Mrs. W. as my amanuensis.

This day, however, being considerably better, we shall go to Dover; with a view to embark for Ostend to-morrow, unless detained by similar obstacles. From Ostend we mean to go to Ghent, to Antwerp, Breda, Utrecht, Amsterdam, to Rotterdam by Harlem, the Hague and Leyden, thence to Antwerp by another route, and perhaps shall return by Mechlin, Brussels, Lille and Ypres to Calais, or direct to Ostend as we came. We hope to be landed in England within a month. We shall hurry through London homewards, where we are naturally anxious already to be, having left Rydal Mount so far back as February.

Now for a word about yourself, my dear friend. You had long been followed, somewhat blindly, by our good wishes; we had heard nothing of you, except through Mr. Quillinan and from Mr. Monkhouse. If there was

any fault in your not writing sooner, you made amends by entering so kindly into the particulars of what you had done and proposed to do; where you are living, and how you were as to estate, body and mind. It is among my hopes that, either in Westmoreland or west of England, I may — at no very distant time — be a witness of your happiness; and notwithstanding all my faults and waywardnesses, have an opportunity of recommending myself to the good graces of your helpmate.

I have time for little more; as, in an hour and a half, we must leave our good friends here, this elegant conventual mansion (with its pictures and its books), and bid farewell to its groves and nightingales, which this morning have been singing divinely. By the bye it has been so cold that they are silent during the season of darkness! These delights we must surrender, and take our way on foot three miles along the pleasant banks of Stour, to fall in with the Dover coach. At this moment the southwest wind is blustering abominably, whirling the leaves and blossoms about in a way that reminds me of the tricks it is playing with the surf on the naked coast of Ostend! But courage! we depart with many good wishes, to which yours shall be added, as no act of presumption on our part. God bless your sojourns, and grant us a happy meeting; if not in this world, in a better! to which my wife says *Amen.*

Ever affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

John is at New College, Oxford. Should you pass through enquire after him. He would be overjoyed to see you.

CCCLXXXVII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Wednesday 11th [or 12th] November, [1823.]

. . . William joined me from the Castle [Lowther], where he had been staying, and we proceeded together up Hawes-water, in a gig lent us by Lord Lonsdale. The first time I saw Hawes-water was from your house; and many thoughts did our journey revive of you and yours, and the happy day we spent in going to Mardale. We took the gig as far as we could, and then proceeded over the fell on foot, to the head of Long Sleddale, a very interesting valley, crossed at the first houses to Kentmere (Bernard Gilpin's[1] birthplace), thence over another fell to Troutbeck, crossed that vale also, and home by Low-wood. I never spent a more rememberable day, seldom a pleasanter; though the latter part of our journey was performed in the dark; which, however, was of little consequence, as it was over familiar ground. It would be a charming journey for any one, either on horseback, or on foot, on a long summer's day. . . .

CCCLXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

Rydal Mount, November 23d, [1823.]

My dear Sir,

On returning from Leicestershire a few days ago, I had the pleasure of finding in its destined place the bust of Sir Walter Scott. It is, as you say, a very fine one; and I

[1] Bernard Gilpin (1517–1583), an eminent Westmoreland divine, named "The Apostle of the North." — Ed.

doubt not you have been equally select in the one which you have sent of me to Sir Walter. I will take care that my debt to you on this score shall be speedily discharged. And here I am reminded of an obligation of the same kind, which I am afraid has not been met as it ought to be. Pray, has Mr. Edward Coleridge paid for the cast of my bust which, at his request, was forwarded to him at Eton? Bear in mind that I am ultimately responsible for it. I am already in possession of a cast of Mr. Southey, a striking likeness as to feature; but so ill executed, in point of character and expression, that I must defer placing a likeness of that honored friend in company with this fine one of Sir Walter, till I can procure one from the hand of Mr. Chantrey; who, I hope, will one day undertake a work which would redound to the credit of both parties. I am not without hope also that Mr. Chantrey may be induced to transmit to posterity the magnificent forehead of one of the first intellects that Great Britain has produced, I mean that of Mr. Coleridge, and proud should I be to place this *triumvirate of my friends* in the most distinguished station of my little mansion.[1]

Many thanks for your letter. The interest which yourself and family take in my writings, and person, is grateful to my feelings; testimonies of this kind are among the very pleasantest results of a literary life. The ground upon which I am disposed to meet your anticipation of the spread of my poetry is, that I have endeavoured to dwell with truth upon those points of human nature in which all men resemble each other, rather than on those accidents of manners and character produced by times

[1] Allan Cunningham was clerk of works in the studio of Francis Chantrey from 1814 till 1842. — Ed.

and circumstances; which are the favourite seasoning (and substance too often) of imaginative writings. If, therefore, I have been successful in the execution of my attempt, it seems not improbable that as education is extended, writings that are independent of an over (not to say vicious) refinement will find a proportionate increase of readers, provided there be found in them a genuine inspiration.

The selection you again advert to will no doubt be executed at some future time. Something of the kind is already in progress at Paris, in respect to my poems in common with others. The value of such selections will depend entirely upon the judgment of the editor. . . . Meanwhile I am going to press (at last) with a re-publication of the whole of my poetry,[1] including *The Excursion*, which will give me an opportunity of performing my promise to you, by sending you the whole, as soon as it is ready for delivery.

The collection of songs which you announce[2] I had not heard of. Your own poetry shows how fit you are for the office of editing native strains; and may not one hope that the taste of the public in these matters is much improved since the time when Macpherson's frauds[3] met with such dangerous success, and Percy's ballads[4] produced those hosts of legendary tales that bear no more resemblance to their supposed models than Pope's Homer does to the work of the blind bard. Do not say I ought to have been a Scotchman. Tear me not from the country

[1] The edition of 1832. — Ed.

[2] The *Songs of Scotland* (1825). — Ed.

[3] *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language* (1760). — Ed.

[4] The *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765). — Ed.

of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton; yet I own that since the days of childhood, when I became familiar with the phrase, "They are killing geese in Scotland, and sending the feathers to England" (which every one had ready when the snow began to fall), and when I used to hear, in the time of a high wind, that

> Arthur's bower has broken his band,
> And he comes roaring up the land;
> King o' Scot's wi' a' his power
> Cannot turn Arthur's bower,

I have been indebted to the North for more than I shall ever be able to acknowledge. Thomson,[1] Mickle,[2] Armstrong,[3] Leyden,[4] yourself, Irving[5] (a poet in spirit), and I may add Sir Walter Scott were all Borderers. If they did not drink the water, they breathed at least the air of the two countries. The list of English Border poets is not so distinguished, but Langham was a native of Westmoreland, and Brown the author of the *Estimate of Manners and Principles*, etc., — a poet as his letter on the vale of Keswick, with the accompanying verses, shows — was born in Cumberland.[6] So also was

[1] James Thomson (1700–1748), born at Ednam, Roxburghshire, author of *The Castle of Indolence*, etc. — Ed.

[2] William Julius Mickle (1755–1788), born at Langham, translator of *The Lusicad* of Camoens. — Ed.

[3] John Armstrong (1707–1799), born in Roxburghshire, poet and physician, author of *The Art of Preserving Health*. — Ed.

[4] John Leyden (1775–1811), born at Denholm, Roxburghshire, poet, physician, and orientalist. — Ed.

[5] Edward Irving (1792–1834), preacher, founder of the "Catholic Apostolic Church." — Ed.

[6] John Brown (1715–1766), a versatile writer, was born in Northumberland (not Cumberland). He wrote a poem on *Honour*, an *Essay upon Satire*, a poem on *Liberty*, but his best known work was

Skelton,[1] a demon in point of genius; and Tickell[2] in later times, whose style is superior in chastity to Pope's, his contemporary. Addison and Hogarth were both within a step of Cumberland and Westmoreland, their several fathers having been natives of those counties, which are still crowded with their names and relatives. It is enough for me to be ranked in this catalogue, and to know that I have touched the hearts of many by subjects suggested to me on Scottish ground; these pieces you will find classed together in the new edition. Present my thanks to Mrs. C. for her kind invitation. I need not add that if you, or any of yours, come this way we shall be most happy to see you.

Pray give my congratulations to Mr. Chantrey on the improvement in Mrs. C.'s health; they have both our best wishes; and believe me, my dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCLXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

Rydal Mount, December 26th, [1823.]

Dear Sir,

. . . I have not, nor ever had, a single poem of Lord Byron's by me, except the *Lara*, given me by Mr. Rogers; and therefore could not quote anything illustrative of his

his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times.* He helped Charles Avison in his *Essay on Musical Expression* (1753). — Ed.

[1] John Skelton (1460?–1529), poet, clergyman, satirist. — Ed.

[2] Thomas Tickell (1686–1740), poet, etc., born at Bridekirk, Cumberland. — Ed.

poetical obligations.[1] So far as I am acquainted with his works, they are most apparent in the third canto of *Childe Harold;* not so much in particular expressions, though there is no want of these, as in the tone (assumed rather than natural) of enthusiastic admiration of Nature, and a sensibility to her influences. Of my writings you need not read more than the blank verse poem on the river Wye to be convinced of this. Mrs. W. tells me that in reading one of Lord B.'s poems, of which the story was offensive, she was much disgusted with the plagiarisms from Mr. Coleridge — at least she *thinks* it was in that poem — but as she read the *Siege of Corinth* in the same volume, it might possibly be in that. If I am not mistaken there was some acknowledgment to Mr. C. which takes very much from the reprehensiveness of literary trespasses of this kind. Nothing lowered my opinion of Byron's poetical integrity so much as to see "pride of place" carefully noted as a quotation from Macbeth, in a work where contemporaries — from whom he had drawn wholesale — were not adverted to. It is mainly on this account that he deserves the severe chastisement which you, or some one else, will undoubtedly one day give him, and may have done already, as I see by advertisement the subject has been treated in the *London Magazine.*

I remember one impudent instance of his thefts. In Raymond's translation of Coxe's *Travels in Switzerland,*[2] *with Notes by the Translator*, is a note with these words (speaking of the fall of Schaffhausen): "Lewy (sic) descendant avec moi sur cet échafaud, tomba à genoux en criant: *voilà un enfer d'eau!*" This expression is taken

[1] Indebtedness to others. — Ed.

[2] William Coxe (17——1828) published *Travels in Switzerland*, three volumes, in 1789. — Ed.

by Byron and beaten out unmercifully into two stanzas, which a critic in the *University Review* is foolish enough to praise. They are found in the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*.[1] Whether the obligation is acknowledged or not I do not know, having seen nothing of it but in quotation.

Thank you for your parallels. I wished for them on Mr. Rogers' account, who is making a collection of similar things relating to Gray. There are few of yours I think which one could swear to as conscious obligations. The subject has three branches — accidental coincidences without any communication of the subsequent author, unconscious imitations; and deliberate conscious obligations. The cases are numerous in which it is impossible to distinguish these by anything inherent in the resembling passage; but external aid may be called in with advantage where we happen to know the circumstances of an author's life and the direction of his studies. Do not suffer my present remissness to prevent you favouring me with a letter if there is the least chance of my being of service to you. I shall reply immediately if I have anything to say worthy your attention. With best wishes from myself and family, I remain, dear sir,

Very sincerely yours, WM. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — When you write to your father, be so good as to make my respectful remembrances to him.

[1] A mistake is here made, either by Raymond, or Coxe, or Wordsworth. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, stanzas 68–72, Byron is describing not the falls of Schaffhausen in Switzerland, but those of Terni in Italy; the river Velino, on which the latter occur, being expressly mentioned in stanza 69. In a note to stanza 71, praising the "cascata del marmore" of Terni, Byron says he "had not yet seen" Schaffhausen. — Ed.

1824

CCCXC

William Wordsworth to Walter Savage Landor

RYDAL MOUNT, January 21, 1824.

My dear Sir,

. . . You promise me a beautiful copy of Dante, but I ought to mention that I possess the Parma folio of 1795, — much the *grandest* book on my shelves, — presented to me by our common friend, Mr. Kenyon.

. . . You have given me minute criticism of *Laodamia*. I concur with you in what you say of the first stanza, and had several times attempted to alter it upon your grounds. I cannot, however, accede to your objection to the "second birth," merely because the expression has been degraded by conventiclers. I certainly meant nothing more by it than the *eadem cura*, and the *largior æther*, etc., of Virgil's sixth Æneid. All religions owe their origin, or acceptation, to the wish of the human heart to supply in another state of existence the deficiencies of this, and to carry still nearer to perfection whatever we admire in our present condition; so that there must be many modes of expression, arising out of this coincidence, or rather identity of feeling, common to all mythologies; and under this observation I should shelter the phrase from your censure; but I may be wrong in the particular case, though certainly not in the general

principle. This leads to a remark in your last, "that you are disgusted with all books that treat of religion." I am afraid it is a bad sign in me that I have little relish for any other. Even in poetry it is the imaginative only, viz., that which is conversant with, or turns upon infinity, that powerfully affects me. Perhaps I ought to explain: I mean to say that, unless in those passages where things are lost in each other, and limits vanish, and aspirations are raised, I read with something too much like indifference. But all great poets are in this view powerful religionists, and therefore among many literary pleasures lost, I have not yet to lament over that of verse as departed. As to politics, what do you say to Buonaparte on the one side, and the Holy Alliance on the other, to the prostrate Tories, and to the contumelious and vacillating Whigs, who dislike or despise the Church, and seem to care for the State only so far as they are striving — without hope, I honestly believe — to get the management of it? As to the low-bred and headstrong Radicals, they are not worth a thought. Now my politics used always to impel me more or less to look out for co-operation, with a view to embody them in action. Of this interest I feel myself utterly deprived, and the subject, as matter of reflection, languishes accordingly. Cool heads, no doubt, there are, in the country, but moderation naturally keeps out of sight; and, wanting associates, I am less of an Englishman than I once was, or could wish to be. Show me that you excuse this egotism, if you can excuse it, by turning into the same path, when I have the pleasure again to hear from you.

It would probably be wasting paper to mention Southey, as no doubt you hear from him. I saw Mrs. S. and four of his children the other day; two of the girls most

beautiful creatures. The eldest daughter is with her father in town. S. preserves excellent health, and, except that his hair is grizzled, a juvenile appearance, with more of youthful spirits than most men. He appears to be accumulating books in a way that, with my weak eyes, appalls me. A large box of them has just strayed into my house through a blunder in the conveyance.

Pray be so good as to let me know what you think of Dante. It has become lately — owing a good deal, I believe, to the example of Schlegel [1] — the fashion to extol him above measure. I have not read him for many years; his style I used to think admirable for conciseness and vigour, without abruptness; but I own that his fictions often struck me as offensively grotesque and fantastic, and I felt the poem tedious from various causes.

I have a strong desire to become acquainted with the Mr. Hare [2] whom you mention. To the honour of Cambridge, he is in the highest repute there, for his sound and extensive learning. I am happy to say that the Master of Trinity College, my brother, was the occasion of his being restored to the Muses from the Temple. To Mr. Hare's brother, Augustus,[3] I am under great obligation for having volunteered the tuition of my elder son, who is at New College, Oxford, and who, though he is not a youth of quick parts, promises, from his assiduity and passionate love of classical literature, to become an excellent scholar. . . .

Believe me, ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

[1] See his *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*. — Ed.

[2] Julius Charles Hare (1795–1855), author of *Guesses at Truth*, etc. — Ed.

[3] 1792–1834. — Ed.

CCCXCI

William Wordsworth to James Montgomery[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan. 24, 1824.

. . . I feel much for their [the climbing boys'] unhappy situation, and should be glad to see the custom of employing such helpless creatures in this way abolished. But at no period of my life have I been able to write verses that do not spring up from an inward impulse of some sort or other; so that they neither seem proposed nor imposed. . . . I should have written sooner, but it was possible that I might have fallen into a track that would have led to something. . . .

CCCXCII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

PLAYFORD HALL, NEAR IPSWICH,
Tuesday Morning, 23d May, 1824.

My dear Friend,

On my way from Cambridge last Friday, as soon as I had secured my luggage, etc., I set off towards your brother's house, stopped at Mrs. Kitchener's to enquire after her, and just as I was setting out again your brother and sister were coming up the Square. Instead of proceeding to Southgate I turned in again with them, and Mrs. R. stayed till the coach took me up.

I was much pleased to see a chearful countenance when she met me, and though I marked the traces of age coming on, and of past suffering, on the whole she looked much

[1] A Scottish poet (1776–1854), author of *The Wanderer in Switzerland, Greenland, Pelican Island*, etc. — Ed.

better than I had expected. In fact, she told me she had rallied wonderfully since her late distress I shall stop in Southgate on my return; Mrs. Luff, who will be my companion to Rydal, going forward to the inn, where she will take care of luggage, etc. My time will be very short, as the coach only remains half an hour at Bury. We shall travel with our family cares — the whole of Mrs. Luff's living stock, three singing birds of gay plumage brought from the Mauritius.

Thank you for your letter, which I received at Cambridge, with the parcel and two books for my brother's use. . . .

Yours affectionately,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCXCIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont

RYDAL MOUNT, 18th Sept., Saturday, [1824.]

My dear Lady Beaumont,

. . . Now for our own travellers. They have thridded North Wales, and hardly left a celebrated spot unseen. Mr. Jones, my brother's first pedestrian companion on his tour in Switzerland, joined them with his car and servant, and travelled with them everywhere. They were to part at the Devil's Bridge last Tuesday, and on Wednesday expected to reach Mr. Hutchinson's house at Hindwell. . . .

My letters have been from Dora, who gives a most lively account of what she has seen, especially of the ladies at Llangollen (I cannot spell these Welsh names), with whom they spent an evening; and were well pleased with *them* and their entertainment. Dora says of Conway Castle, "Having left the vale of Clwydd, we soon came in sight

of Conway, which I think the king of castles. Nothing that I have heard of it, nothing that I have seen — not even Sir George's picture — gives one a sufficient idea of its grandeur. Here we spent more than three hours, but it would take more than three days to become acquainted with it. The longer I stayed the longer I wished to stay. They are erecting a bridge across the river, on the same plan as at Bangor Ferry, which I think will be an improvement to the appearance of the castle when the newness is worn off."

So much for the distant travellers; but we, at home, have had our travels. Mrs. Luff, William, and I spent three days in Borrowdale very agreeably; not wholly in Borrowdale, for William and I went over the Sty to Wasdale, with a party of our friends. Bright sunshine after torrents of rain set off the charms of Borrowdale and the sublimities of Scawfell to the best advantage, and all were delighted. . . . Sara Coleridge rode over to us in Borrowdale. She is extremely thin; I could not but think of a lily flower to be snapped by the first blast, when I looked at her delicate form, her fair and pallid cheeks. She is busy with proof-sheets, — a labour that she likes, — yet I should be glad if it were over, and she could be employed and amused at the same time without exercising her mind by thought and study. Southey is much better, and I think he looks pretty well. He had been on Helvellyn the week before last, a proof of recovered strength! Mrs. Coleridge, and the rest of the family, well; except Mrs. Lovel. Southey seemed to be very sorry to give up the expectation of seeing Sir George in the North. I told him, however, that there was perhaps a little chance of his coming, recollecting your message to Lord Lonsdale. Believe me, dear Lady Beaumont, your faithful and affectionate friend,

D. Wordsworth.

CCCXCIV

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

HINDWELL, RADNOR, Sept. 20, 1824.

My dear Sir George,

After a three weeks' ramble in North Wales, Mrs. Wordsworth, Dora, and myself are set down quietly here for three weeks more. The weather has been delightful, and everything to our wishes. On a beautiful day we took the steam-packet at Liverpool, passed the mouth of the Dee, coasted the extremity of the vale of Clwyd, sailed close under Great Orme's Head, had a noble prospect of Penmaenmawr, and having almost touched upon Puffin's Island, we reached Bangor Ferry a little after six in the afternoon. We admired the stupendous preparations for the bridge over the Menai, and breakfasted next morning at Carnarvon. We employed several hours in exploring the interior of the noble castle, and looking at it from different points of view in the neighbourhood.

At half-past four we departed for Llanberris, having fine views, as we looked back, of Carnarvon Castle, the sea, and Anglesey. A little before sunset we came in sight of Llanberris Lake, Snowdon, and all the craggy hills and mountains surrounding it; the foreground a beautiful contrast to this grandeur and desolation. A green sloping hollow furnished a shelter for one of the most beautiful collections of lowly Welsh cottages, with thatched roofs overgrown with plants, anywhere to be met with. The hamlet is called Cwm-y-Glo. And here we took boat, while the solemn lights of evening were receding towards the tops of the mountains. As we

advanced, Dolbadarn Castle came in view, and Snowdon opened up to our admiration. It was almost dark when we reached the quiet and comfortable inn at Llanberris. . . .

There being no carriage-road, we undertook to walk by the Pass of Llanberris, eight miles, to Capel Curig; this proved fatiguing, but it was the only oppressive exertion we made during the course of our tour. We arrived at Capel Curig in time for a glance at the Snowdonian range, from the garden of the inn in connection with the lake (or rather pool), reflecting the crimson clouds of evening. The outline of Snowdon is perhaps seen nowhere to more advantage than from this place. Next morning, five miles down a beautiful valley to the banks of the Conway, which stream we followed to Llanrwst; but the day was so hot that we could only make use of the morning and evening.

Here we were joined, according to previous arrangement, by Bishop Hobart, of New York, who remained with us till two o'clock next day, and left us to complete his hasty tour through North and South Wales. In the afternoon arrived my old college friend and youthful companion among the Alps, the Rev. R. Jones, and in his car we all proceeded to the Falls of the Conway, thence up that river to a newly-erected inn on the Irish road, where we lodged, having passed through bold and rocky scenery along the banks of a stream which is a feeder of the Dee. Next morning we turned from the Irish road three or four miles to visit the "Valley of Meditation" (Glyn Myvyr), where Mr. Jones has, at present, a curacy, with a comfortable parsonage. We slept at Corwen, and went down the Dee to Llangollen, which you and dear Lady B.[1] know well. Called upon the celebrated recluses,[2] who hoped

[1] Beaumont. — Ed.

[2] The Lady E. Butler and the Hon. Miss Ponsonby. — Ed.

that you and Lady B. had not forgotten them; they certainly had not forgotten you, and they begged us to say that they retained a lively remembrance of you both. We drank tea and passed a couple of hours with them in the evening, having visited the aqueduct over the Dee and Chirk Castle in the afternoon. Lady E.[1] has not been well, and has suffered much in her eyes, but she is surprisingly lively for her years. Miss P.[2] is apparently in unimpaired health. Next day I sent them the following sonnet from Ruthin, which was conceived, and in a great measure composed, in their grounds —

> A stream, to mingle with your favourite Dee,
> Along the *Vale of Meditation* flows;
> So named by those fierce Britons, pleased to see
> In Nature's face the expression of repose, etc.

. . . We passed three days with Mr. Jones's friends in the vale of Clwyd, looking about us, and on the Tuesday set off again, accompanied by our friend, to complete our tour. We dined at Conway, walked to Benarth, the view from which is a good deal choked up with wood. A small part of the castle has been demolished, for the sake of the new road to communicate with the suspension bridge, which they are about to make to the small island opposite the castle, to be connected by a long embankment with the opposite shore. The bridge will, I think, prove rather ornamental when time has taken off the newness of its supporting masonry; but the mound deplorably impairs the majesty of the water at high-tide; in fact it destroys its lakelike appearance.

Our drive to Aber in the evening was charming, the sun setting in glory. We had also a delightful walk next

[1] Eleanor Butler. — Ed. [2] Ponsonby. — Ed.

morning up the vale of Aber, terminated by a lofty waterfall; not much in itself, but most striking as a closing accompaniment to the secluded valley. Here, in the early morning, I saw an odd sight — fifteen milkmaids together, laden with their brimming pails. How chearful and happy they appeared! and not a little inclined to joke after the manner of the pastoral persons in Theocritus. That day brought us to Capel Curig again, after a charming drive up the banks of the Ogwen, having previously had beautiful views of Bangor, the sea, and its shipping. From Capel Curig down the justly celebrated vale of Nant Gwynant to Beddgelert. In this vale are two small lakes, the higher of which is the only Welsh lake which has any pretensions to compare with our own; and it has one great advantage over them, that it remains wholly free from intrusive objects. We saw it early in the morning; and with the greenness of the meadows at its head, the steep rocks on one of its shores, and the bold mountains at *both* extremities, a feature almost peculiar to itself, it appeared to us truly enchanting.

The village of Beddgelert is much altered; for the houses have, in a great measure, supplanted the old rugged and tufted cottages; and a smart hotel has taken the place of the lowly public-house in which I took refreshment almost thirty years ago, previous to a midnight ascent to the summit of Snowdon. At B. we were agreeably surprised by the appearance of Mr. Hare, of New College, Oxford. We slept at Tan-y-bwlch, having employed the afternoon in exploring the beauties of the vale of Festiniog. Next day to Barmouth, whence, the following morning, we took boat and rowed up its sublime estuary, which may compare with the finest of Scotland, having the advantage of a superior climate. From Dolgelly we went to Tal-y-Llyn, a solitary and very interesting lake under

Cader Idris. Next day, being Sunday, we heard service performed in Welsh, and in the afternoon went part of the way down a beautiful valley to Machynlleth, next morning to Aberystwith, and up the Rheidol to the Devil's Bridge, where we passed the following day in exploring those two rivers, and Hafod in the neighbourhood.

I had seen these things long ago, but either my memory or my powers of observation had not done them justice. It rained heavily in the night, and we saw the waterfalls in perfection. While Dora was attempting to make a sketch from the chasm in the rain, I composed by her side the following address to the torrent:

> How art thou named? In search of what strange land,
> From what huge height descending? Can such force
> Of water issue from a British source?[1]

Next day, viz., last Wednesday, we reached this place, and found all our friends well, except our good and valuable friend, Mr. Monkhouse, who is here, and in a very alarming state of health. . . . He is a near relation of Mrs. Wordsworth, and one, as you know, of my best friends. I hope to see Mr. Price, at Foxley, in a few days. Mrs. Wordsworth's brother is about to change his present residence for a farm close by Foxley.

Now, my dear Sir George, what chance is there of your being in Wales during any part of the autumn? I would strain a point to meet you anywhere, were it only for a couple of days. Write immediately, or should you be absent without Lady Beaumont, she will have the goodness to tell me of your movements. I saw the Lowthers just before I set off; all well. You probably have heard

[1] See Vol. VII, pp. 129–130, of the *Poetical Works*, published by Messrs. Macmillan in their Eversley edition.

from my sister. It is time to make an end of this long letter, which might have been somewhat less dry if I had not wished to make you master of our whole route. Except ascending one of the high mountains — Snowdon or Cader Idris — we omitted nothing, and saw as much as the shortened days would allow. With love to Lady Beaumont and yourself, dear Sir George, from us all, I remain, ever most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCXCV

Dorothy Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, October 4th, [1824.]

My dear Sir,

About three weeks ago, on returning from a walk, a letter, in which I instantly recognised your handwriting, was given to me. . . . I was reconciled to your having been compelled to visit the sea and the grey-green fields of Bognor, instead of our brighter valleys, as you would have found neither my brother, nor sister, nor niece at home; and I hope that you will have free choice next summer, and that choice will lead you hither. . . .

I need not say how glad we should have been to accept your friendly invitation, had it been in our power to visit you at Bath, and to take a ramble on the Quantock Hills, on which, through God's mercy, we can yet walk with as light a foot as in the days of our youth. But it is time to begin with what has been done. My brother and Dora left me at Cambridge in May; they returned directly to Rydal Mount, and I followed them in June, after paying a short visit to Mrs. Clarkson near Ipswich. Since that time we have had scarcely anything but fine summer

weather, such as *you* ought to have when you first introduce Mrs. Kenyon to these lakes and mountains; and though, as I say, I am not sorry that you did not come in the autumn months I wish you could have been here in the summer. It will be six weeks to-morrow since Mrs. Wordsworth and my brother left us. Three of those weeks they spent in North Wales, thridding that romantic country through every quarter. My brother — to whom it was familiar ground when a very young man — has been pleased beyond expectation and remembrance, and his wife and daughter (to *them* all was new) have been delighted. They have, however, had a sad draw-back from the agreeable thoughts and feelings which they carried along with them to *South* Wales. There, on the banks of the Wye, they met our friend, Mr. Thomas Monkhouse, who by the advice of physicians had come thither, to his brother, for the sake of quiet, dry and pure air, and chearful society. . . . My brother and sister were heart struck at the first sight of him. He looks like a person far gone in consumption.

You will be glad to hear that my nephew William is, though not a thriving plant, what — but for his looks — we should call healthy at present. He is not fit for a public school. Therefore he attends Hartley Coleridge, who has now fourteen scholars — a flourishing concern for an Ambleside schoolmaster! — and he is steady and regular.

I have just had a letter from Mrs. Coleridge, by which I learn that your friends, Mr. and Mrs. Guillemard, are at Keswick. I shall desire her to say to them that I hope, if they return by this road, they will turn aside to look at Rydal Mount, though there is no chance of their finding my brother and sister at home. I think we shall hardly see them before the middle of November, as they think

of paying a short visit to Sir George and Lady Beaumont at Coleorton, on leaving Wales, and most likely it will be the third week of this month before they leave Wales. . . .

Yours truly,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCXCVI

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, AMBLESIDE,
November 16, 1824.

Dear Sir,

On my return home, after a prolonged absence, I found upon my table your little volume and accompanying letter, for both of which I return you sincere thanks. The letter written by my sister upon their arrival does not leave it less incumbent on me to notice these marks of your attention. Of the poems I had accidentally a hasty glance before; I have now perused them at leisure, and notwithstanding the modest manner in which you speak of their merits, I must be allowed to say that I think the volume one of no common promise, and that some of the pieces are valuable, independent of such consideration. My sister tells me she named the *Ten Years Ago*. It is one of this kind; and I agree with her in rating it more highly than any other of the collection. Let me point out the thirteenth stanza of the first poem as — with the exception of the last line but one — exactly to my taste, both in sentiment and language. Should I name other poems that particularly pleased me, I might select the

[1] Editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*, the *Standard*, and author of *Poetical Sketches*, etc. — Ed.

Sketch from Real Life, and the lyrical pieces, the *Serenade* and *Dost thou love the Lyre?* The fifth stanza of the latter would be better omitted, slightly altering the commencement of the preceding one. In lyric poetry the subject and simile should be as much as possible lost in each other.

It cannot but be gratifying to me to learn from your letter that my productions have proved so interesting; and, as you are induced to say, beneficial, to a writer whose pieces bear such undeniable marks of sensibility as appear in yours. I hope there may not be so much in my writings to mislead a young poet as is by many roundly asserted.

". . . I am disposed strenuously to recommend to your habitual perusal the great poets of our own country, who have stood the test of ages. Shakespeare I need not name, nor Milton, but Chaucer and Spenser are apt to be overlooked. It is almost painful to think how far these surpass all others. . . ."

I have to thank you, I presume, for a *Leeds Intelligencer*, containing a critique on my poetical character, which, but for your attention, I probably should not have seen. Some will say, "Did you ever know a poet who would agree with his critic when he was finding fault, especially if on the whole he was inclined to praise?" I will ask, "Did you ever know a critic who suspected it to be possible that he himself might be in the wrong?" in other words, who did not regard his own impressions as the test of excellence? The author of these candid strictures accounts with some pains for the disgust or indifference with which the world received a large portion of my verse, yet without thinking the worse of this portion himself; but wherever the string of his own sympathies is not touched the blame is mine. *Goody Blake and Harry Gill* is apparently no favourite with the person who has

transferred the article into the Leeds paper; yet Mr. Crabbe in my hearing said that "everybody must be delighted with that poem." The *Idiot Boy* was a special favourite with the late Mr. Fox and with the present Mr. Canning. The South American critic quarrels with the *Celandine*, and no doubt would with the *Daffodils*, etc.; yet on this last the other day I heard of a most ardent panegyric from a high authority. But these matters are to be decided by principles; and I only mention the above facts to show that there are reasons upon the surface of things for a critic to suspect his own judgment.

You will excuse the length of this letter, and the more readily if you attribute it to the respect I entertain for your sensibility and genius.

Believe me, very truly,

Your obedient servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCXCVII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, 23rd Nov., 1824.

. . . I am ashamed of being so long in fulfilling my engagement. But the promises of poets are like the perjuries of lovers, things at which Jove laughs! At last, however, I have sent off the two first books of my translation [1] to be forwarded by Mr. Beckett. I hope they will be read with some pleasure, as they have cost me a good deal of pains. Translation is just as to labour what the

[1] Translation of the *Æneid*. Wordsworth contributed three books of his translation to the *Philological Museum*, printed at Cambridge in 1882 (see Vol. I, p. 382). — Ed.

person who makes the attempt is inclined to. If he wishes to preserve as much of the original as possible, and that with as little addition of his own as may be, there is no species of composition which costs more pains. A literal translation of an ancient poet in verse, and particularly in rhyme, is *impossible*. Something must be left out, and something added. I have done my best to avoid the one and the other fault. I ought to say a prefatory word about the versification, which will not be found much to the taste of those whose ear is exclusively accommodated to the regularity of Pope's Homer. I have run the couplets freely into each other, much more even than Dryden has done. This variety seems, to me, to be called for, if anything of the movement of the Virgilian versification be transferable to our poetry; and, independent of this consideration, long narratives in couplets with the sense closed at the end of each are to me very wearisome. . . .

CCCXCVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to John Kenyon

[Nov. 28, 1824.]

My dear Sir,

. . . The travellers returned delighted with North Wales, all in good health and with improved looks. My brother's eyes have during the summer been mostly in their better way, and are still so — very usable for a short while at a time by daylight; but hardly at all by candlelight; and this, I fear, is the best that we may be allowed ever to expect from them. . . .

Our friends at Keswick are pretty well. Southey has got rid of his summer cold. Sara Coleridge's eyes are

no worse. . . . Derwent keeps his situation as third master of Plymouth school, and we (hearing nothing amiss) conclude he is going on well. As to poor Hartley, he sticks to his school-hours, is liked by his scholars, and is still "Hartley" among them; even (out of school) the bigger ones address him "Hartley!" This will give you a notion of the nature of the discipline exercised by him. . . .

Believe me, dear sir,
Yours faithfully,
DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, 28th Nov.

Do you hear frequently of or from Mr. Poole? and how is he? Do you know whether Coleridge has lately been at Harrowgate or not? A rumour of his having been there has reached these parts, but we think there must be a mistake in the name, and that it has been some watering-place in the South.

CCCXCIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Dec. 1, 1824.

[She quotes the two sonnets by her brother *To Mary Monkhouse* and *To Rotha Quillinan*, and adds] My brother desires me to beg you (this I know is unnecessary) not to give copies of these sonnets to any one; but they having been composed only for the love of private friends, and for the sake of expressing his own peculiar feelings with regard to the two infants, he is particularly desirous that they should not be spread abroad, either by copies or by being read to any persons but such as may have an interest

in the parents or children. . . . You have heard of the melancholy fate of Mrs. Quillinan, Rotha's mother. She died at the age of 28 — at Ivy Cottage.

Pray give our united love and best wishes to Charles Lamb and his sister. . . . Be so good as to ask Charles if my brother's translation of Virgil is in his possession. Tell him, too, that if he would send us a letter either from his India House desk or from Colebrook cottage, we should all be well pleased; and, if addressed to my brother, I can insure him an answer from himself.

Postscript after postscript! Did you ever read the letter of orders for a Scarlet Cardinal? If you did, I am sure this will remind you of it. First a *morning* paper is desired (to be forwarded the same evening). If that cannot be, an evening paper next day — if not, a *morning* paper sent *next* day — and last of all, if none of the above can be had, an *evening* three-days-a-week paper.

I fear you will not succeed, knowing that there is great difficulty in obtaining second-hand newspapers.

CCCC

Mary Wordsworth to Lady Beaumont

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 9th, [1824.]

My dear Lady Beaumont,

I lose not a moment to tell you that William has made up his mind to avail himself of your proposal that the carriage shall be turned over to you, on the ground that the money which was to pay for it (viz., part of the produce of the new edition) is gone in another direction — the purchase of the field.[1] We all earnestly hope with

[1] Dora's field, below Rydal Mount. — Ed.

you that the time for building will never arrive, but it is an amusement to talk of, and when spring comes the employment of planting upon *his own land* (though under such a tenure it can scarcely be called so) will be a great amusement to William, and stand him in the stead of driving one or two of us in the carriage, which I am sure, under existing circumstances, it is prudent to give up, as your kindness allows us to do so.

The field was an extravagant price, but, lying where it does, it cannot be a loss in the end. And we did hope that the possession of it might be the means of our being permitted to remain at Rydal Mount. I fear we herein have judged wrong.

You take the right view of making the best of our disappointment (if aught so uncertain can be called one) in regard to Merton. Yet from the Bishop of London's opinion we have gathered hope that the thing is not impossible. He says, "I can hardly conceive that there can be any direct exclusion of the diocese of Chester in the Book of Merton. If there be, it must be of recent enactment, that diocese having been formed out of parcels of York and Lichfield, which one would think would have continued to enjoy their ancient privileges notwithstanding the change of jurisdiction." We have, therefore, in conformity to the good bishop's suggestion, made application at Oxford, and the result will settle the point. If, unexpectedly, it prove favourable, William is determined that the apparent difficulty of the pursuit shall not discourage his efforts; and, indeed, from every letter we have received we have good hope of success *eventually*. Lord Lonsdale had procured us the vote of General Capel; and Mr. Canning and many others — whose interest could not be questioned — expressed not only willingness, but

pleasure, at the opportunity given them to hope they might be of service to William. This is gratifying, if nothing else comes of it; in which case many considerations are at hand to persuade me it is best it should be so.

Under any consideration it would be most satisfactory to us if John's thoughts should rest upon the Church; but this is a delicate subject, and unless his own mind — in conjunction with our own wishes, which are not unknown to him — led him thither, we should think it wrong to *press* him into the sacred profession merely to gain a worldly maintenance. The Army is out of the question; he knows that; and, strong as his bias towards the profession seems to be, at his age, and in times of peace, he would not give way to it. You are very good to be interested, and allow me to write to you, about him. This subject leads me to another, which you will not be sorry to hear has ended as it has done.

The Bishop of Chester cannot ordain J. Carter consistently with the rule he has prescribed to himself, viz., not to ordain any who have not been from the first educated for the ministry, *i.e.* those who have followed other business, or who have not been at the University or at St. Bees. J. C. is too honourable to seek for ordination in any other diocese after this declaration, and has given up the thought of going into the Church. I should have been sorry, did I not believe that some other means of advancing himself — more useful to others, as well as more profitable to himself — may without difficulty be hit upon; in the meanwhile he is invaluable where he is.

We have had some few mild days, but the winter has set in very fiercely. From Herefordshire we hear wonderful reports of the fineness of the season, and good tidings of Mrs. Hutchinson, which you will be glad to learn.

I conclude that Lady Susan Percy has left; Coleorton, as you mention, being shut up for the winter. I enjoy, in imagination, the quiet of your fireside. I am to send you a corrected copy of the sonnet suggested by you; therefore, dear Lady Beaumont, with best love and respectful remembrances from all,

Believe me ever to be affectionately yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCI

William Wordsworth to Walter Savage Landor

December 11, 1824.

My dear Sir,

I have begged this space from S., which I hope you will forgive, as I might not otherwise for some time have courage to thank you for your admirable *Dialogues*.[1] They reached me last May, at a time when I was able to read them, which I did with very great pleasure; I was in London then, and have been a wanderer most of the time since. But this did not keep me silent; I was deterred by a consciousness that I could not write what I wished. I concur with you in so much, and differ with you in so much also, that, though I could have easily disposed, I believe, of my assent, — easily and most pleasantly, — I could not face the task of giving my reasons for my dissent. For instance, it would have required almost a pamphlet to set forth the grounds upon which I disagreed with what you have put into the mouth of Franklin on Irish affairs, the object to my mind of constant anxiety. What would I not give for a few hours'

[1] Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* was published in 1824. — Ed.

talk with you upon republics, kings, and priests and priestcraft? This last I abhor; but why spend our time declaiming against it? Better endeavour to improve priests, whom one cannot and ought not therefore endeavour to do without. We have far more to dread from those who would endeavour to expel not only organised religion, but all religion, from society, than from those who are slavishly disposed to uphold it; at least I cannot help feeling so. Your *Dialogues* are worthy of you, and great acquisitions to literature. The classical ones I like best, and most of all that between Sully and his brother. That which pleases me the least is the one between yourself and the Abbé de Lille. The observations are just, I own, but they are fitter for illustrative notes than the body of a dialogue, which ought always to have some little spice of dramatic effect. I long for the third volume. . . . I sent a message of thanks through Julius Hare, whom I saw at Cambridge in May last.

Ever affectionately and gratefully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 13, [1824.]

My dear Friend,

I should have written to welcome your return to England, having about that time an opportunity of making a letter-carrier of one of our visitors to the Lakes, but I shrunk from being the first to communicate to you the sad tidings of poor Thomas Monkhouse's hopeless state, and merely sent a message through Miss Lamb, begging

for news of you and an account of your continental travels. We have heard from Mrs. Clarkson of your being well and in good spirits. That is all; not a word of where you have been, or what doing. Pray write to us. Do not suppose I require a journal; but spoiled by former kindnesses in this way, I really *have been disappointed* at not receiving one before this time; write, however, and if the journal comes hereafter it will be thankfully received. My brother and sister, with their daughter, arrived at home a month ago, after an absence of eleven and a half weeks. Their tour in North Wales was delightful, — much surpassing remembrance and expectation; to my brother the ground had been familiar in the days of his youth, but all was new to the females. They spent five weeks among their friends in Herefordshire and Radnorshire. . . . My brother and Dora were at Keswick for four days last week. Southey is in his usual good spirits, happy in his various employments. Sara Coleridge is busy correcting proofs; she has translated a book from the French, either written by the Chevalier Bayard or by some other person, concerning him and his times, I know not which. Cuthbert Southey is a clever boy, and I hope it will please God to preserve him for the comfort and delight of his poor father, whose loss seemed irreparable when Herbert (then his only son) died. Mrs. Coleridge, Mrs. Southey, and the rest of the family are well. . . . My brother has not yet looked at *The Recluse;* he seems to feel the task so weighty that he shrinks from beginning with it, yet knows that he has now no time to loiter if another great work is to be accomplished by him. I say another, for I consider *The Excursion* as one work, though the title-page tells that it is but a *part* of one that has another title. He has written some very pretty small

poems. I will transcribe two of them which have been composed by him with true feeling; and he has great satisfaction in having done them — especially that on Mary Monkhouse, for her dear father's sake, who prizes it much.

John is just arrived from Oxford, and your old friend William is well in health, though not fit to be trusted off to school at a distance. . . . I hardly think my brother will stir away from Rydal next summer; yet he sometimes hints at going into Ireland, and says when he *does* go he will take me along with him. But we have all been such wanderers during the last twelve months, that the pleasantest thought at present is that of being gathered together at home, and all quietly enjoying ourselves. There is no country that suffers so little as this in bad weather, none that has so much of beauty (and more than beauty) in the winter season; and at Rydal Mount especially we are favoured, having the sun right before our windows both at his rising and setting. My brother, who is famous for providing opportunities for his friends to do him a service, desires me to ask you to be so good as to inquire what is the present price of shares in the Rock Insurance. He has a little money to dispose of, and you know he was fortunate in his purchase from that office. Can you recommend any other mode of laying out money? I am further to ask you if it be possible, through your newsman, or through any one whom you know of, to have a daily paper sent to my brother the day after publication. We have lost our good neighbours from the Ivy Cot (Mr. and Mrs. Elliott), and with them their newspaper; and now we only see our own provincial papers, and in these long winter evenings my brother feels a want of the little break-in which our friends' paper used to make among us. . . .

I hope you often see Charles and Mary Lamb, and that they are well; Mrs. Field brought a very good account of her.

What a loss the Lambs, not less than you, must feel this winter of the cheerful resting-place and never-failing cordial welcome by Thomas Monkhouse's fireside! . . . We all join in kindest remembrances.

Believe me, ever your faithful and affectionate friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCCIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

1824.

. . . My brother was well and in good spirits at Cambridge, and we all enjoyed our visit there very much. The weather was delightful the first week. Then came the flood—a new scene for us, and very amusing. On the Sunday, when the sun shone out again, the Cam, seen from the Castle Hill, resembled one of the lake-like reaches of the Rhine. The damage was, I fear, very great to the farmers; but though the University grounds were completely overflowed up to Trinity Library, in the course of four days most of the damage was repaired.

I think we shall remain here about a fortnight longer. We intend to stay two nights at Cambridge, two in Leicestershire, two in Yorkshire; and, after that, one day's journey, a night spent at Kendal, and a three hours' ride before breakfast will take us to Rydal Mount. . . .

Truly yours,

D. WORDSWORTH.

1825

CCCCIV

William Wordsworth to J. Fletcher[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Jan'ry 17th, 1825.

Sir,

. . . I object to nothing which you say upon the scenery of N. W.[2], considered *per se*. Your analysis of it is, as far as it goes, undeniably just; but it seems next to impossible to discriminate between the claims of two countries to admiration with the impartiality of a judge. In one's mind one may be just to both, but something of the *advocate* will creep into the language, as an office of this kind is generally undertaken with a view to rectify some injustice. This was the case with myself, in respect to a comparison which I have drawn between our mountains and the Alps. The general impression is, I am afraid, that I give the preference to my native region, which was far from the truth; but I wished to show advantages which we possessed that were generally overlooked, and *dwelt* upon these, slightly adverting only to the points in which the Alps have the superiority. The result then is, that *I* may appear to have dealt unfairly with that marvellous portion of the earth that is presented to view in the Swiss and Italian valleys. In

[1] Living at Allerton, near Liverpool. — Ed.
[2] North Wales. — Ed.

like manner *you* have the appearance of being unjust to Scotland. I am indeed not acquainted with any tract in Scotland of equal compass so worthy of admiration as Snowdon, and its included and circumjacent valleys; and this is the district which has suggested the principal part, if not the whole, of your observations.

But there are tracts in North Wales that are as tame and uninteresting, and almost as desolate, as the worst in Scotland, though certainly not so extensive. I cannot but think that if the landscape interests of the Highlands were as condensed as those of North Wales, or of *this* country, they would bear a comparison more favourable than you are inclined to allow them. We employed three weeks in exploring North Wales, far too short a time. A complete circuit ought to be made of Snowdon, and the like of Cader Idris; centres to a pair of magnificent circles. We went from Dolgelly to Barmouth by land, and returned by water; but it was with the utmost regret that I left the shore, on our right as we returned, wholly unexplored. We saw something more of the Tal-y-lyn side of the mountain; but, owing to the state of the weather, far less than we wished. I am so much pleased with your communication, that I am desirous to know what use you mean to make of it.

If I do not visit Scotland during the ensuing summer, I shall in all probability re-examine North Wales, not with any view of writing a tour through the country but of giving an analysis of Snowdon, Cader-Idris, and their several dependencies, with a sketch of the characters of the principal rivers. But you appear to be so well qualified for this, that I should be happy to hear that you meant to undertake it; my wish being to teach the touring world (which is become very numerous), to look through

the clear eye of the understanding, as well as through the hazy one of vague sensibility. Pray let me have the conclusion at your earliest convenience, and tell me precisely what you mean by objects being picturesque, and yet unfit for the pencil. Many objects are fit for the pencil, which are not picturesque; but I have been in the habit of applying the *word* to such objects only as are so.

I remain, dear sir, your obedient servant,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCV

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

Rydal Mount, 21 January, 1825.

. . . Where were you last summer? Mrs. Wordsworth, my daughter and I, spent three weeks in a delightful ramble through North Wales, and saw something of South Wales, particularly the course of the Wye above Hereford, nearly to its source.

I saw Southey the other day; he was well, and busy as usual, and as his late letter shows, not quite so charitably disposed to *Don Juan* deceased as you evidently are, if I may judge by a tribute to his memory bearing your name, which I accidentally met with in a newspaper; but *you* were the Don's particular friend. An equal indulgence, therefore, could not be expected from the laureate, who, I will not say was his particular enemy, but who had certainly no friendship for him. Medwin makes a despicable figure as the salesman of so much trash. I do not believe there is a man living, from a shoeblack at the corner of your street up to the Archbishop of Canterbury

or the Lord Chancellor, of whose conversation so much worthless matter could be reported, with so little deserving to be remembered, as the result of an equal number of miscellaneous opportunities. Is this the fault of Lord B. or his Boswell? The truth is, I fear, that it may be pretty equally divided between them.

My amanuensis, Mrs. W., says that it is not handsome in me to speak thus of your friend. No more it is, if he were your friend *mortuus*, in every sense of the word; but his spirit walks abroad, to do some good I hope, but a plaguy deal of mischief. . . .

Most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCVI

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

RYDAL MOUNT, 19 Feb., [1825.]

My dear Rogers,

. . . It has sometimes struck me that my Miscellaneous Poems might be so arranged, if thought advisable, as to be sold in separate volumes. One volume we will say of local poetry, to consist of *The River Duddon*, the Scotch Poems with additions, the Continental Pieces, and others. A volume of sonnets, perhaps, etc. I throw this out merely as a hint, being persuaded that many are deterred by the expense of purchasing the whole, who would be glad of a part. Yet I am aware there might be strong objections to this. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCVII

William Wordsworth to J. Fletcher

RYDAL MOUNT, February 25th.

My dear Sir,

. . . First let me correct an error respecting my own meaning, into which I have led you. When I observed that many objects were fitted for the pencil without being picturesque, I did not mean to allude, as you infer, to the Dutch School, but to the highest order of the Italian artists, in whom beauty and grace are predominant; and I was censurably careless in not indicating that my eye was directed less upon landscape than upon their mode of treating the human figure, in their Madonnas, Holy Families, and all their pieces of still life. These materials, as treated by them, we feel to be exquisitely fitted for the pencil; yet we never think of them as picturesque, but — shall I say — as something higher, something that realizes the idealisms of our nature, and assists us in the formation of new ones. Yet I concur with you that the Dutch School has made excellent use of objects which in life and nature would not by a superficial observer be deemed picturesque, nor could they with any propriety, in popular language, be termed so. This, however, I suspect is because our sense of their picturesque qualities is overpowered by disgust, which some other properties about them create. I allude to their pictures of insides of stables, dung-carts, dunghills, and foul and loathsome situations, which they not unfrequently are pleased to exhibit. But strip objects of these qualities, or rather take such as are found without them, and if they produce a more agreeable effect upon canvas than in reality, then I think it may be safely said that the

qualities which constitute the picturesque are eminently inherent in such objects.

I will dismiss this (I fear tedious) subject with one remark, which will be illustrated at large, if I execute my intention, viz., that our business is not so much with objects, as with the law under which they are contemplated. The confusion incident to these disquisitions has, I think, arisen principally from not attending to this distinction. We hear people perpetually disputing whether this or that thing be beautiful or not, sublime or otherwise, without being aware that the same object may be both beautiful and sublime, but it cannot be felt to be such at the same moment; but I must stop. Let me only add, that I have no doubt the fault is in myself, and not in you, that I have not caught your meaning as clearly as I could wish.

I do not relish the notion of interfering with any use you might be disposed to make of your interesting MS. My own plan is so uncertain that you ought not to cede anything to it. My first view was, as I have said, to analyze the regions of Snowdon and Cader Idris, with a glance at some more remote river scenery in North Wales. I have since taken up another thought, and feel inclined to make Snowdon the scene of a dialogue upon nature, poetry, and painting to be illustrated by the surrounding imagery. . . .

I wish your tragedies had been more successful, particularly if you are likely to be discouraged from a second adventure, though I am the last person to press publication upon any one, and I think it for the most part very prejudicial to young writers. I have not seen your plays, from which no inference can be drawn to their prejudice. Very few modern publications find their way to me. We

have no book clubs in this neighbourhood, and when I am from home — in spring and summer — my eyes are so apt to be inflamed that I am able to profit little by anything that falls in my way.

With many thanks and sincere respect, believe me to be

Truly yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCVIII

William Wordsworth to Samuel Rogers

RYDAL MOUNT, March 23, [1825.]

My dear Friend,

. . . I do not look for much advantage either to Mr. M., or to any other bookseller with whom I may treat, and for still less to myself, but I assure you that I would a thousand times rather that not a verse of mine should ever enter the press again, than to allow any of them to say that I was, to the amount of the strength of a hair, dependent upon their countenance, consideration, or patronage. . . . You recollect Dr. Johnson's short method of settling precedence at Dilley's, "No, sir; authors above booksellers." . . .

I have seen Southey lately. He tells me that Murray can sell more copies of any book that will sell at all, than Longman; but it does not follow from that, that in the end an author will profit more, because Murray sells books considerably lower to the trade, and advertises even more expensively than Longman, though that seems scarcely possible. Southey's *Book of the Church* cost £100 for advertising the first edition. This is not equal to my little tract on the Lakes. The first edition — for which *I* got £9 8*s.* 2*d.* — was charged £27 2*s.* 3*d.* for advertising.

The second edition is already charged £30 7*s.* 2*d.* to me; the immense profits are yet to come. Thus my throat is cut; and if we bargain with M., we must have some protection from this deadly weapon. I have little to say, — the books are before the public, — only there will be to be added to the miscellaneous volumes about sixty pages of new matter, and two hundred, viz., the "Memorials" and "Ecclesiastical Sketches" (not yet incorporated with them), and *The Excursion* to be printed uniform with them in one volume. I mean to divide the poems into five volumes in this way.

First volume as at present, to consist of "Childhood and Early Youth," "Juvenile Pieces," and "Poems of the Affections," withdrawing from it *The Blind Highland Boy* (to be added to the "Scotch Poems"); *Ruth*, *Laodamia*, *Her Eyes are Wild*, etc., to be added to the "Poems of the Imagination."

Second volume to consist of poems of "Fancy and Imagination," as now; the "Scotch Poems" to be subducted, and their place supplied (as above) with the ode *To Enterprise* and others.

Third volume, "Local Poems" — *The River Duddon*, "Scotch Poems," with some new ones, "The Continental Memorials," and "Miscellaneous Poems," selected out of the four volumes, with some additions, those "On the Naming of Places," and *The Wagonner*.

Fourth volume to consist of "Sonnets, Political and Ecclesiastical," meaning the "Sketches," and "Miscellaneous," with the *Thanksgiving Ode*, and other political ones.

Fifth volume, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, the "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection," "Elegies and Epitaphs," *Final Ode*, etc.

Sixth volume, *The Excursion.*

Now these volumes, I conjecture, will run about three hundred and forty pages each, and *The Excursion* to four hundred and fifty. Of the "Miscellaneous," two volumes, — viz., the local poetry, and the sonnets, — might perhaps be sold separately to advantage. The others cannot be divided without much injury to their effect upon any reflecting mind.

As to your considerate proposal of making a selection of the most admired or the most popular, even were there not insuperable objections to it in my own feelings, I should be utterly at a loss how to proceed in that selection. Therefore I must abide by the above arrangement, and throw the management of the business upon your friendship. . . .

Ever your obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCIX

William Wordsworth to J. Fletcher

RYDAL MOUNT, April 6th.

Dear Sir,

. . . Your tragedies I have read with much pleasure, they are in language, versification, and general propriety — both as to sentiment, character, and conduct of story — *very much* above mediocrity; so that I think every one that reads must approve in no ordinary degree. Nevertheless I am not surprised at their not having attracted so much attention as they deserve. First, because they have no false beauties, or spurious interest; and next (and for being thus sincere I make no apology), the

passions, especially in the former, are not wrought upon with so daring a hand as is desirable in dramatic composition. In the first play, the tragic character of the story would lead you to expect that the interest would settle upon the father, who, in his joint character of magistrate and father, became the judge and executioner of his own son; but it does not. The lady attached to Giovanni undergoes the most dramatic feelings of any one in the piece, — there is a conflict in her mind in more than one scene that is sufficiently animated; but the incident which is the hinge of the whole, viz. the death of Giovanni, is produced without design, and the play moves throughout with too little of a prospective interest, so that you do not hang trembling upon the course of events in part foreseen.

The second play, though less poetical and elegant, has I think much more of *dramatic* interest. Some of the situations are pregnant with anxiety, and strong emotion; in particular the point where the youth arrives, unexpected by his mother; and, he himself being safe, has to blast her congratulatory joy by being the bearer of such miserable news as his father's death. This is a fine reverse. The foster brother's situation is also well suited to tragedy, and indeed the general course of this story involves in its nature a plot, — things being done by design, — an advantage in which, as I have already observed, I think the other deficient. I am well pleased to possess your book, and more especially as coming from yourself.

Now for your MS. I find no fault with your Scotch tour, but that you have given us too little of it. I am reconciled to your comparative judgment of the two countries — now understanding it, which I did not before. I have seen much more of Scotland than you notice, and

particularly regret your silence upon Loch Linne, Glencoe, the Fall of Foyers, and those upon the river Beauly, with all of which I was delighted; but the pleasure given by these several scenes depends absolutely upon the weather, and upon accidents. When I wished to see the sublime mountains of Glencoe a second time, they were hidden by vapoury rain; Loch Linnhe — which looking seaward from Portnacroish (excuse bad spelling) had presented to my eyes one of the most beautiful visions I ever beheld — appeared upon a second visit many years after (from a changed state of atmosphere only) with its islands and shores, cold, spotty, dreary, and forbidding. Waterfalls, and close river scenes, are full as much as extensive landscapes, dependent upon accident. You may have too much, or too little, water. Those of Foyers and Beauly I have only seen once, and in perfection.

You have been successful in clearing up my doubts as to your meaning upon the picturesque. It would occupy more paper than I have before me, and require more exertion than this languid *summer's day* in April (for such it is, the heat reverberated from our mountains) would allow, to establish my position that "the sublime and beautiful cannot be felt in the same instant of time"; attaching such meaning to the words as I think they ought to bear. One is surprised that it should have been supposed for a moment, that *Longinus* writes upon the sublime, even in our vague and popular sense of the word. What is there in Sappho's ode that has any affinity with the sublimity of Ezekiel or Isaiah, or even of Homer or Æschylus? Longinus treats of animated, empassioned, energetic, or, if you will, elevated writing. Of these, abundant instances are to be found in Æschylus and Homer; but nothing would be easier than to

show, both by positive and negative proof, that his ὕψους when translated "sublimity" deceives the English reader, by substituting an etymology for a translation. Much of what I observe you call sublime, *I* should denominate grand or dignified. But, as I wrote before, we shall never see clearly into this subject, unless we turn from objects to laws. I am far from thinking that I am able to write satisfactorily upon matters so subtile, yet I hope to make a trial and must request your patience till that time.

I cannot conclude without expressing a hope that the beauties of our Lakes may tempt you to revisit them, when you will receive a kind welcome from myself and family at any time. I am a little too old to be an active guide for things at a distance, but I would lead you to the most interesting points in my own neighbourhood with great pleasure.

Ever sincerely I remain, dear sir, yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, April 12th, 1825.

My dear Friend,

I think we should have heard from you ere this had not the same causes prevented you that kept me from writing. When our dear friend was taken for ever from us, I shrank from the task, and persuaded myself that you (sympathizing so truly with us as I know you do) would write to some of us. Then came the happy tidings

of Charles Lamb's freedom; and again I thought every post would bring a report from you of the effect upon him, and his good sister, of some pleasant evening you had spent together in their quiet home. I expect in vain, and the opportunity of sending a packet to London tempts me to break the silence, though with little to say of ourselves. And why should I dwell on regrets for a loss[1] which time can never repair to us? We feel it daily. Though so far distant from the house which he inhabited, his was a hospitable home ever ready for us. No doubt you have heard what an easy death he had. He was prepared for it thoroughly, yet no one through the course of a long illness perhaps ever clung more fondly to life. Probably his exemption from severe pain might in part contribute to this. Then he had been a fortunate and a happy man, and was deeply attached to family and friends. . . .

Before I turn to other subjects I must mention one grievous circumstance. Our poor friend made his own will, in consequence of which his intentions towards his brother will in some degree be frustrated. He had left him his estate (in Cumberland), but having only two witnesses to the will, the estate will go to the child. This is the more to be regretted, as — when she comes of age — her fortune will be large, far beyond the needs of any woman of her rank; and the uncle, owing to bad times for farming, is in rather confined circumstances. He, however, only laments the circumstance as defeating his lamented brother's wishes — not at all on his own account. He and Mrs. Hutchinson, the sister, will each have a handsome legacy.

[1] The death of Thomas Monkhouse. — Ed.

A few days ago, my brother had a most interesting letter from Charles Lamb. He feels Thomas Monkhouse's death just as I thought he would feel it. Oh! that I could flatter myself that this release from the necessity of remaining in, or near, London would ever bring us the happiness of seeing them here; and, above all, of having them stationary near us for a few months — a whole winter — or a whole summer! This, I fear, can never be.

The *Quarterly Review* is now in the house. My brother has read your article with great pleasure, and says you think too humbly of the style in which it is done. He thinks the matter excellent, the style good enough. I have not yet had an opportunity of reading it.

. . . My brother will soon be sending out a new edition of his poems — in six volumes — *The Excursion* included. I never have thanked you for the valuable notes you were so kind as to add to my journal of our tour — not, I assure you, because they were not prized, but because, except one, I did not discover them till the other day, when glancing my eye over it, on lending it to a friend. As to compressing, or rewriting, I shall never do it. My plan would be — make another tour, and write a better journal; that is, in some respects more comprehensive, in others less so. Not that I regret that this is as it is; for it well answers the purpose intended, of reviving recollections.

I do not think my brother will stir far from home this summer, he was so much of a wanderer the last and the preceding; indeed we shall most likely all stay at home, so pray contrive to peep in amongst us on your way to some other quarter of his Majesty's dominions; or, come on purpose, and stay as long as you like. We cannot hope to see you if you have a Continental scheme.

Give our kind love to Charles and Mary Lamb when you see them, and believe me

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

In what an admirable point of view is your friend Flaxman's character set forth in Hayley's Life!

How is your sister?

CCCCXI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

RYDAL MOUNT, 4th May, [1825.]

My dear Friend,

An unusual event, a letter from Coleridge, impels me to take the pen immediately. He begins by requesting, in the most earnest language, that I will use my interest with the Hoares of Hampstead (if I have any), and with Mr. Clarkson, to promote an object that he has very much at heart. He then states that a Mr. Harrison, a Quaker, is coming to settle at Highgate; and that he is most anxious that his friend, Mr. Gilman, should be recommended to the said Mr. Harrison, as his medical attendant. Now this matter, as nakedly stated to us, at this distance from Highgate, might seem of little importance; but to dear Coleridge, from his extreme earnestness, it is evident few things at this present time are of more. I will quote from his letter, and you shall judge for yourselves. But, by the bye, I must first explain that the letter (except the introductory sentence) was originally addressed to another friend, who, he afterwards found,

had no acquaintance with Mr. Harrison; and Coleridge, not having time to write another letter to me, forwarded that which had been intended for his male friend.

"I hear that a neighbour of yours is coming to settle at Highgate, and I will venture to entreat you, in my own name, and as an act of friendship to me personally, that you would use your interest in recommending Mr. Gilman as his medical attendant." Coleridge then goes on to speak in high terms of Mr. G.'s medical skill, and of his excellent moral character; and states that a Mr. Snow has been recommended to Mr. Harrison by one of the "religious"; and, from what C. says, it appears that he is apprehensive of a formidable rival in this Mr. Snow, who is favoured by certain denominations of religious persons. This will throw some light upon Coleridge's wish that his friend should attend Mr. Harrison's family. We live in a strange world. What can be so stupid as to choose a medical adviser from any other considerations than professional skill, humanity, and integrity! To these points Coleridge speaks decidedly in Mr. Gilman's favour, and all Coleridge's friends think highly of him. . . . Sara's translation of Bayard's Life[1] is published; the style and execution very good. She is to go to London in the autumn. Her eyes are not worse, but no better. Mrs. Coleridge was very pleasant. Worrying is of no use with her children; and she is now satisfied to be quiet, and does not fret and flurry as she used to do. Adversity is the best school, I believe, for the best of us; and poor Mrs. Coleridge has had enough of it, in the

[1] A translation from the French, issued in two volumes under the title of *The Right Joyous and Pleasant History of the Facts, Tests, and Prowesses of the Chevalier Bayard, the Good Knight without Fear and without Reproach: by the Loyal Servant*, first published in 1825. — Ed.

shape of humiliation and disappointed hopes concerning the talents of her sons. Dear Sara is a sweet creature, so thoughtful and gentle, patient and persevering. . . .

CCCCXII

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

RYDAL MOUNT, May 28th, [1825.]

My dear Sir George,

It delights me indeed to receive a letter from you written in such a happy state of mind. Heaven grant that your best wishes may be realised; and surely the promises from this alliance are of the fairest kind. What you say of George gives me great pleasure. I hope he will enter into your feelings and Lady Beaumont's in respect to Coleorton, with a becoming spirit; so that your views may not be frustrated. This I have much at heart. The place is worthy of the pains you have taken with it, and one cannot breathe a better wish for him, as your successor, than that his duties there should become his principal pleasure. How glad should we be to hear that Lady Beaumont is tranquillised; I wish we could transport her hither for a week at least under this quiet roof, in this bright and fragrant season of fresh green leaves and blossoms. Never, I think, have we had so beautiful a spring; sunshine and showers coming just as if they had been called for by the spirits of Hope, Love, and Beauty. This spot is at present a paradise, if you will admit the term when I acknowledge that yesterday afternoon the mountains were whitened with a fall of snow. But this only served to give the landscape — with

all its verdure, blossoms, and leafy trees — a striking Swiss air, which reminded us of Unterseen and Interlaken.

Most reluctantly do I give up the hope of our seeing Italy together; but I am prepared to submit to what you think best. My own going with any part of my family must be deferred till John is nearer the conclusion of his University studies; so that for this summer it must not be thought of. I am truly sensible of your kind offer of assistance, and cannot be affronted at such testimonies of your esteem. We sacrifice our time, our ease, and often our health, for the sake of our friends (and what is friendship unless we are prepared to do so?). I will not then pay *money* such a compliment, as to allow *it* to be too precious a thing to be added to the catalogue, where fortunes are unequal, and where the occasion is mutually deemed important. But at present this must sleep.

You say nothing of painting. What was the fate of Mont Blanc? and what is the character of the present annual exhibitions? Leslie, I hear, has not advanced. John Bull is very bitter against poor Haydon, who, it is to be apprehended, is not making progress in the art.

I never had a higher relish for the beauties of Nature than during this spring, nor enjoyed myself more. What manifold reason, my dear Sir George, have you and I to be thankful to Providence! Theologians may puzzle their heads about dogmas as they will, the religion of gratitude cannot mislead us. Of that we are sure, and gratitude is the handmaid to hope, and hope the harbinger of faith. I look abroad upon Nature, I think of the best part of our species, I lean upon my friends, and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of St. John; and my creed rises up of itself with the

ease of an exhalation, yet a fabric of adamant. God bless you, my ever dear friend. Kindest love to Lady Beaumont.

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXIII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

May, 1825.

It rejoices me to see the Lowther name and the Lowther interest in the minority.[1] I have not seen the reports of the evidence before Parliament, only certain extracts in newspapers, and passages quoted in the debates. But whatever may be the weight of such evidence, it cannot overbalance in my mind all that I have read in history, all that I have heard in conversation, and all that I have observed in life. As far as I can learn, it is in a great degree a measure *ex parte;* but were not this so, I must own that, in a complex and subtle religious question, as this is, I should reckon little on formal and dressed-up testimony, even upon oath, compared with what occurs in the regular course of life, and escapes from people in unguarded moments. Little value, then, can be put upon committee-evidence, contradicting (as here) men's opinions in their natural overflow. From what may be observed among the Irish and English Romanists, it is justly to be dreaded that there is a stronger disposition to approximate to their brethren in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere, than to unite in faith and practice with us Protestants. . . .

The majority of the people of England are against concession, as would have been proved had they been

[1] Presumably in the House of Commons. — Ed.

fairly appealed to, which was not done because the laity were unwilling to take the lead in a matter (notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary) eminently ecclesiastical; and the clergy are averse from coming forward except in a corporate capacity, lest they should be accused of stirring up the people for selfish views; and thus the real opinion of the nation is not embodied.

I ventured to originate a petition from the two parishes of Grasmere and Windermere, including the town of Ambleside. There were not half a dozen dissenting voices. . . .

CCCCXIV

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

June, 1825.

. . . I hear that Mr. Marshall is a member of the London College Committee, and active in all the *improvements* now going forward. It cannot be doubted that a main motive with the leaders of this and similar institutions is to acquire influence for political purposes. Mr. Brougham mentions, as a strong inducement for founding the proposed college, that it will render medical education so much cheaper. It is clearly cheap enough. We have far more doctors than can find patients to live by; and I cannot see how society will be benefited by swarms of medical practitioners starting up from lower classes in the community than they are now furnished by. The better able the parents are to incur expense, the stronger pledge have we of their children being above meanness, and unfeeling and sordid habits. As to teaching Belles Lettres, Languages, Law, Political Economy, Morals, etc.,

by lectures, it is absurd. Lecturers may be very useful in Experimental Philosophy, Geology, and Natural History, or any Art or Science capable of illustration by experiments, operations, and specimens; but in other departments of knowledge they are, in most cases, worse than superfluous. Of course I do not include in the above censure *College Lectures*, as they are called, when the business consists not of haranguing the pupils, but in ascertaining the progress they have made. . . .

CCCCXV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
July 2, 1825.

My dear Friend,

. . . Though my brother is preparing for the press he has not yet even fixed upon a publisher, so it will be some time before the poems are out. He has had so little profit in his engagement with Longman that he is inclined to try another; and he (Longman), after assuring him that it would not answer for the concern to allow a larger share of profits — or, in other words, more than half (my brother being secured from loss) — assured him that they should not think themselves unhandsomely used if he applied elsewhere (as he had proposed to do). After all, I think, it will prove that he is *not likely to mend himself;* and perhaps may turn again to the Longmans, from whom, if he parts, he parts on friendly terms. I wish he had made up his mind, and, for my part, am sorry that he has ever entertained a thought of change; for his works are not likely to be much aided in sale, by exertions

even of the most active publishers. Do not mention this matter, nor speak of it in reply to me; for I believe no one has heard of it except the person employed as a negotiator, and, I assure you, there has been no great encouragement. I hope we may see you here some weeks before the poems can be printed; for if you go into Ireland you will certainly not refuse a berth in one of these packets to Glasgow, thence to the Hebrides, and you will come home by *Rydal Mount*, to say nothing of the inducement of the Lakes. My brother would gladly accompany you, and make me one of the party. He would do so were money no object; nor indeed would he *make* it an object in the present case, had he not a much grander scheme in view, for which all our savings must be heaped up; no less than spending a whole winter in Italy, and a whole summer in moving about from place to place, in Switzerland and elsewhere, not neglecting the Tyrol. John Wordsworth will have finished at Oxford at the close of the year 1826; and we talk, if it can be accomplished, of setting out in the spring of 1827, and in our day-dreams you always make one of the company. I speak seriously; such is our plan. But even supposing life, health, and strength are continued to us, there will still be difficulties, — the Stamp Office, the house, home, and other concerns to be taken care of, etc. None of these difficulties, however, appear to be insurmountable; so you *must* go to the Highlands, on purpose to come back by this road, to plan with my brother, to give us estimates of expenses, and to enable us to settle a hundred things. My brother fancies that he might almost make the journey cost nothing by residing *two* years abroad; but that is too long a period to enter into the first scheme, especially for a government

agent. I trust before 1827 you will be quite satisfied of the propriety of retiring from the law, and that in the meantime you will have continued to you the cheerful spirits which make even the *drudgery* of your London life no misfortune. We keep our scheme entirely to ourselves, you only (as a destined sharer in it) are made acquainted with it; and for various reasons — especially the delicacy required in managing any business of this kind with the rulers of the Stamp Office — we shall not speak of it, till it is needful to make arrangements for effecting our purpose; therefore give no hint to any one. Surely amongst so many we might make up a tour, — print and publish, — that would at least have enough of originality in the manner of it to ensure some profit; but we must see our way clearly before us without any help of that kind. But no more of this. I cast my eyes with fear and trembling on what I have just been writing. Of the party from this house, one only (my niece) is going. The youngest of us elder ones will have numbered fifty-four years next Christmas. This thought leads me to your poor sister, who may, I fear, have much pain to endure before her final release. If she be still near you, pray give my kind regards to her and sincerest good wishes. . . . It would give us great pleasure to hear of Charles Lamb's having got through his troublesome business, and being again able thoroughly to enjoy his liberty. When you wrote he had a sort of nervous feverishness hanging upon him. A long journey, I find, is not to be thought of; but I hope his sister and he will make one of their little trips before the summer is over. . . .

We are sadly out of the way of magazines. This I say only for Charles Lamb's sake. I begin now to despair of seeing any of his last papers till they are

published all together; yet if Mr. De Quincey ever does find his way back to Rydal, we can borrow the magazines from him. With all this scarcity of magazines, novels from our lady friends have poured in upon us so fast that we are muddled among them, and can never attempt to get through all. Besides, I am deep in Madame de Genlis's life,[1] a hundred times more entertaining than the best of our now-a-day novels, and how much more surprising! If you have not read this book, pray do so. I ought to have told you that after three weeks' stay at Harrogate we hope to have Miss Hutchinson at Rydal, and certainly shall, if Mrs. Hutchinson is tempted, according to our expectation, by the Harrogate waters. When you see the Lambs, tell them about her. They also, I believe, know Mrs. H. and her only surviving brother, that excellent man, John Monkhouse. My brother and sister beg their tenderest remembrances, and Dora too, who, in spite of your sauciness, will be very glad to borrow your arm on the Italian precipices. Now say in your next that Ireland and Scotland are your choice for this year, and that you will come and plan with us for Italy. I wish this letter were not half so long, but I know your good nature too well to fear that you will be angry, or even a little cross. God bless you.

Ever your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The Comtesse de Genlis (1746–1830) issued her *Mémoires* in 1825. — Ed.

CCCCXVI

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

KENT'S BANK, August 5, 1825.

Dear Sir,

The interest which you kindly take in the publication of my poems, as expressed by Miss Jewsbury, encourages me to trouble you with a letter upon the subject. A proposal was made to Mr. John Murray, the publisher, by Mr. Rogers, to print seven hundred and fifty copies of six volumes, including *The Excursion*, the author incurring two-thirds of the expense, and receiving two-thirds of the profits. Upon Mr. Murray agreeing to this, I wrote him to inform me what would be the expense; but to this letter, written three months ago, I have received no answer; and therefore cannot but think that I am at liberty, giving due notice to Mr. Murray, to make an arrangement elsewhere. Could a bookseller of spirit and integrity be found, I should have no objection to allow him to print seven hundred and fifty or a thousand copies, for an adequate remuneration, of which you would be a judge on whom I could rely.

My daughter will have thanked Miss Jewsbury in my name for her two interesting volumes, *Phantasmagoria*.[1] Knowing the friendship which exists between you and that lady, it would gratify me to enlarge upon the pleasure which my family and I have derived from her society, and to express our high opinion of her head and heart. It is impossible to foretell how the powers of such a mind

[1] Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800–1833). Her *Phantasmagoria, or Sketches of Life and Character*, published at Leeds in two volumes, was dedicated to Wordsworth. — Ed.

may develop themselves, but my judgment inclines to pronounce her natural bent to be more decidedly toward life and manners than poetic work.

If I have ever the pleasure of seeing you at Rydal Mount, I should be happy to converse with you upon certain principles of style, taking for my text any one of your own animated poems, say the last in your *Souvenir*,[1] which along with your other pieces in the same work[2] I read with no little admiration. With many thanks and high esteem,

I remain

Your obliged servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXVII

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

LOWTHER CASTLE, August 13, 1825.

. . . I do not wish to dispose of the copyright of my works. The value of works of imagination it is impossible to predict. . . .

CCCCXVIII

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

September 5, 1825.

My dear Sir,

The offer of Hurst and Robinson is anything but liberal, and, sharing your opinion, I decline it. Mr.

[1] *The Sleeping Cupid.* — Ed.

[2] *The Death of the First-Born; Kirkstall Abbey.* — Ed.

Longman, on his recent visit, opened the conversation by observing that Messrs. Hurst and Robinson were about to publish my poems. I answered, no; that, through a friend, I had opened negotiations with them, but that their offer had not satisfied me. He asked me to name a sum; and I told him I could not incur the trouble of carrying the work through the press for less than £300 for an edition of a thousand copies, twenty to be placed at my own disposal. He made no objection, and proposed to lay my offer before his partners. Mr. Longman behaved perfectly like a gentleman, and had I to deal with him alone there would be no obstacle. . . .

I am, dear sir,

Your obliged friend and servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXIX

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

RYDAL, September 5, 1825.

My dear Sir,

Allow me to introduce to you Mr. Quillinan, a particular friend of ours, who is just leaving us. He is merely passing through Manchester, but I think you will be pleased with each other, however short the interview. I forgot to thank you for the favourable notice you took of the intended edition of my poems in your journal. I have this moment received my annual account from Longman. *The Excursion* has been more than a year out of print, and none of the *Poems* are left. I find that for forty-nine copies of the four volumes I have received £25-14-6 net profit, great part of which would have been

swallowed up in advertisements if I had not forbidden them a year ago.

Ever most faithfully,
Your obliged friend and servant,
WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXX

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 30th, 1825.

My dear Sir,

My brother is much interested by your simple and affecting report, concerning the character of Mr. Smith's deceased wife, and desires me to say that he is not hopeless of being able to throw off a few lines at some time or other, in contemplating so interesting a character; yet he can by no means promise for himself. There are, however, two points which you have omitted to name, and which are essential in the composition of an epitaph — namely, her age and the date of her decease; therefore, be so good as to inform us of these particulars by the next post after your receipt of this. The day of my brother's departure is not fixed; but I think it will not be later than Thursday, and I very much wish to hear from you before that time, as during his journey it is not unlikely that his thoughts may take the turn which might lead to the accomplishment of his and your wishes. . . . I must not omit to tell you that we have read your journal with great pleasure. There are two or three passages

[1] Many unpublished letters to William Pearson (1780–1856) from William, Dorothy, Mary, and Dora Wordsworth are to be found in the *Memoirs of William Pearson* by his widow, printed for private distribution, in 1863, by Miss Emily Faithful. None of these, however, are of any public or permanent interest. — Ed.

which throw light upon some imperfect recollections of my own, which I shall, with your permission, take the liberty to copy. . . .

Believe me, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

D. WORDSWORTH, Sen.

CCCCXXI

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

COLEORTON HALL, ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCHE,
October 18, 1825.

My dear Sir,

Messrs. Longman & Co. declining my proposition, offer £100 on publication, £50 when an edition of five hundred copies shall have been sold, and the printing of five hundred more to be optional on the same terms. This I have declined; but have proposed to allow them to print an edition of five hundred copies, they paying me on publication £150, and placing twenty copies at my disposal. Mr. Longman acknowledges that there is no doubt of a thousand copies being ultimately sold, but he says that the last edition of five hundred copies took five years to go off. This is not quite accurate. The *Poems* and *The Excursion* were both ready for publication in the autumn of 1820, and, if I am not grossly mistaken, they cleared the expense of printing in less than a year; and in June, 1824, there were none of *The Excursion* on hand, and only twenty-five copies of the *Miscellaneous Poems* remaining. Mr. Longman says that six volumes cannot be sold for less than £2-8.

I am desirous to hear something of your *Souvenir*. I should be very insensible not to be wishful for its

success, and sincerely regret that the restrictions under which I am, do not allow me to make an exception in its behalf, without incurring a charge of disingenuousness.

I remain, my dear sir, very sincerely,

Your obliged friend and servant,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR KENDAL,
November 8th, 1825.

My dear Friend,

My original intention was to meet you with a note of congratulation on your return to the lonesome chambers in King's Bench walk; but I have just heard of poor Mary Lamb's illness, and this is a matter of sincere condolence. I write then chiefly to *inquire* after her, and her brother, and next to plead for a continuation of your journal, the first part of which was duly received, and read by all of us with very great pleasure. It made me wish to touch at those agreeable islands the next voyage we take, if ever we are destined again to wander beyond the shores of Britain. . . . My brother and sister, and Miss Hutchinson, have been a month at Coleorton, and it is from them that we at home have received the distressing tidings of Miss Lamb's illness, brought to them by the Master of Trinity, who has also been at Coleorton. Now, my good friend, I pray you write as soon as you receive this. I hope you may be able to say that the present attack is of the milder kind, as they have lately been, and that she is in the way of recovery. Besides, tell us particularly how Charles is himself. I learn that

the supposed cause of the sister's illness was his having had a relapse after a nervous fever. Beyond this, at present I require no more than to know that you are safe and well, after a journey which I trust has been pleasant; for you have the happy art of enjoying, wherever there is a possibility of finding anything to enjoy. Leave all particulars, only do not retract your promise.

. . . I have stayed at home all summer, and have had an agreeable lot, and the weather has been better than was ever known, and I have had health and strength to allow me to take long walks, which (especially upon the mountains) are as delightful to my feelings as ever in my younger days. My sister has been ten weeks absent. She accompanied Mrs. Thomas Hutchinson to Harrogate, stayed some time there, and met her husband and sister at Sir George Beaumont's.

Nothing is yet done towards the printing of the *Poems* except a bargain made with Hurst and Robinson. Longman was at Rydal with his family; my brother made his proposals to him, which he has no doubt would have been cheerfully acceded to by him, but the firm could not agree to them. Alaric Watts has been the agent with Hurst, etc., and they give all that the author required from the Longmans. I have always believed that they never pushed the sale. If this belief be well founded, there can be no doubt of my brother's being a gainer by the change. When he is at home again, we shall be kept very busy for a while. A new arrangement is to be made, and till the work is printed he will always be attempting to correct faults. . . .

Two Miss Southeys are staying with us, so we are a lively party.

Ever your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXXIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR KENDAL, Nov. 26th, 1825.

My dear Friend,

On telling my brother that I was going to write to you, with a question, "Have you anything to say to him?" his reply was, "A hundred things. Tell him I wish I was as strong as he, that I half envy him his joyous spirits, that I should have liked to have gone with him — or to go with him — to the Tyrol, to Italy, or anywhere"; and he added many more of the hundred things which I have forgotten, and your fancy must supply. And now — setting aside wishes which, for at least two or three years, *cannot* be gratified (college expenses and others being so great) — I must tell you that your letter has interested us very much, and I return you a thousand thanks, not only for gratifying my wishes in the most agreeable manner possible, but for even anticipating them. I did not venture to expect the journal for weeks to come, yet it arrives before my request reaches you; and, at the same time, your account of Charles and Mary Lamb allays our anxiety, though till we hear from you again we cannot be satisfied. Yet I hope he has had no second relapse, and that she has been restored to herself and her good brother at the accustomed period; but, after all that is passed, there must be a heavy struggle with sadness and depression of spirits, before they are reinstated in their usual comforts. Pray give our kindest regards to them, and write, as soon as you have leisure, to tell us exactly how they are going on; and mention also your poor sister, whether she still continues to suffer

less than is usual in her afflicting malady, and if you think it will not give her pain to be reminded of those times when I have seen her, or of one whom she will never meet again in this world. Will you give my love to her, and add that I frequently think of her?

I know not that I have anything new to tell you. It will be a fortnight on Thursday since my brother and sister and Miss Hutchinson returned to Rydal Mount. They spent above a month at Coleorton, and, with stops on the road, were six weeks absent — that is, my brother and Miss H. — but Mrs. W.'s absence had extended to ten weeks and a half when she reached home, and truly happy she was to settle herself again. My sister and Miss H. travelled by coach, waited his arrival at Manchester, and stayed with him there two days, saw some pleasant well-informed people, and one most beautiful picture, for which seven thousand pounds had been refused, — I forget the master's name, the subject is the Holy Family, — the Virgin, they tell me, a striking likeness of Sara Coleridge. This picture belongs to a Manchester merchant, who had it from abroad in lieu of a bad debt. Now, while I speak of Manchester, let me say a word in favour of a friend of Dora's, a Miss Jewsbury, who has written for the *Souvenir*, and for several other periodicals, under the signature of Miss J. J. She is a young woman of extraordinary talents, is a good daughter, and a good sister to a numerous family at the head of which she was left, by the death of their mother, at the age of fifteen. We became acquainted with Miss Jewsbury last summer, and she spent above a week under our roof. Mr. Alaric Watts has encouraged and persuaded Miss Jewsbury to publish two volumes in prose and verse (miscellaneous sketches, short essays, etc.), and there is one

pretty long tale ("The Unknown") which is, to me, affectingly told. The title of the volumes is *Phantasmagoria*, a title which would not be very taking to me were the author a stranger. I mention it, however, in order that if you have leisure you may glance your eye over the book; and, as you are sometimes a dabbler in reviews, you may have an opportunity of serving the authoress, or perhaps Charles Lamb could slip a notice into one of the magazines. I cannot ask either of you to *review* the volumes, though if you would do so, and could in conscience speak favourably, it would be a great kindness done to a deserving person, and gratefully received. I think I told you that Hurst and Robinson are to publish for my brother; but preliminaries are, I find, not yet entirely settled, and our work is not begun. I much fear that the printers will not get through in time for the spring sale, and if so it is the loss of another year.

To return to your tour. Guernsey and Mont St. Michel set me upon wishing, for it would neither be difficult nor expensive to accomplish a circuit thereabouts if we happen to be in the south of England. As to revisiting those vales of the Alps where you have been tracking our steps, it is so large a scheme, that now, in this time of impossibility, I go no further than an exclamation, "If it ever *could* be, how delightful!" We had just such bright weather as you describe in your passage from Meyringen to Grindelwald when we travelled the contrary way, excepting a thundershower while we rested at the châlet, and ate our dinner under the shed at the door opposite the Wetterhorn, alternately hidden and revealed by driving clouds and flashing sunbeams. You ask for an itinerary of our route from Frankfort to Lucerne. It was Frankfort, Darmstadt, Heidelberg, Bruchsal, Karlsruhe,

Rastadt, Baden-Baden, Offenburg, Hornberg (through a beautiful valley), ascended from it through Black Forest to Villingen, Donaueschingen (where is the source of the Danube), Schaffhausen, Zurich, along the banks of the Limmat to Baden, standing close to that river, Lenyberg, Margenthal[1] (it was here we met with the two handsome maidens who danced with poor Thomas Monkhouse), Herzogenbuchsee (here we slept in our carriages), Bern, Thun, Interlaken, Lauterbrunnen, Grindelwald, Meiringen, Handek, back to Meiringen, over the Brünig to Sarnen, Engelberg, back again next day to Stanz, re-embarked at Stanzstad, crossed that part of the lake to Vitznau, walked thence to Lucerne. I spell wretchedly;[2] but a young friend of mine has begun to re-copy my journal, with omissions. In the way of abridging I can do little. . . . For the fair copy I wish, before it is bound, to procure a set of Swiss costumes, and hope by your kindness to be enabled to do so. Perhaps some friend of yours may be going into Switzerland, or perhaps they may be purchased in London at no very great expense. Should the expense be moderate we should like two sets (one for my sister's tour also), but as hers is already bound it is of less consequence, because the prints could not perhaps be inserted without injury to the binding.

.

Remember the Hebrides, which you have not seen, and we are in the way to or from Ireland. . . . God bless you.

Ever your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

[1] This was possibly *Marthalen*. There is no clue to the misspelled *Lenyberg*. — Ed.

[2] The spelling of the names of places was bad, and the whole course of the "itinerary" was mixed up confusedly from memory. See the *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, Vol. II, pp. 163–259. — Ed.

What would I not have given to have heard the avalanches with you!

If the price of costumes in London is beyond what you like to venture unauthorized, pray tell me what it is, and I will say buy, or not buy. Should you be able to procure the costumes by the middle of January a friend of mine will bring the parcel. . . .

CCCCXXIV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

RYDAL MOUNT, December 23d, [1825.]

. . . Have you heard the sad news of our intended dismissal from Rydal Mount?[1] You will recollect my telling you that another year had been granted, though with a warning that Mrs. Huddlestone might want the place. This is thought little of as Mrs. H. said she neither wished to leave Temple Sowerby nor to live here. But through the Crackanthorps we heard that she really intended to live at Rydal Mount. My brother took his resolution immediately, and purchased a piece of land on which to build a house. . . . It is just below Rydal Mount, between the chapel and Mr. Tillbrook's, commanding as fine a view as from our terrace. . . . I tell William (the Patterdale estate paying such poor interest for the money it cost) if he could sell that, he might feel himself not much poorer — considering the present rent of Rydal Mount — than at present. It strikes me as

[1] See the poem, written in 1826, and entitled *Composed when a Probability existed of our being obliged to quit Rydal Mount as a Residence*, Poetical Works, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, p. 289. — Ed.

possible that Mr. Marshall might buy this little estate, as lying near his property in Patterdale. I am sure my brother would be willing to sell it. Still, however, we have a hope that we may be allowed to stay where we are, that Mrs. H. (who we know, must have unwillingly yielded to importunity in giving her consent) may change her mind, or that something may happen to prevent her coming. We think that in such case Lady Fleming cannot be so cruel as to turn us away; besides — even if she has a particular dislike to us as tenants — it would not be less disagreeable to have us as neighbours in a house of our own, so close to her chapel and her hall. . . .

Do not forget my message to Mr. Marshall. It would indeed be a relief to my mind, if (in case my brother does build) that property were sold to meet the expense.

CCCCXXV

Mary Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

RYDAL MOUNT, December 27, 1825.

Dear Sir,

From your continued silence, we cannot but be apprehensive that some demur, which is causing you trouble on the part of Messrs. Hurst and Robinson, has taken place. At the same time Mr. Wordsworth feels it his duty to request that he may be informed how the matter stands, it being both disagreeable and *very* inconvenient to remain in this state of uncertainty. I feel the more sorry thus to trouble you, having heard through Miss Jewsbury how very much you had been harassed; and nothing short of the peculiar injury which this delay occasions to Mr. W., giving him time to exhaust himself

by attempting *needless* corrections, at least what we presume to consider such, could justify my having expressed myself so strongly.

I need not tell you how much the enjoyment of the very pleasant day we passed with Mrs. Watts would have been heightened had we been so fortunate as to have found you at home.

I remain, dear sir, with high respect,

Your obliged servant,

M. WORDSWORTH.

1826

CCCCXXVI

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, 17th January, 1826.

My dear Sir,

I reply to your letter instantly, because I am able to decide upon general grounds, long ago established in my mind. But first let me thank you for addressing yourself directly to me. This procedure adds to the esteem which I have always entertained for you. My answer must be unfavourable to your wishes, as it would be to those of any one similarly circumstanced. The opinion, or rather judgment, of my daughter must have been little influenced by what she has been in the habit of hearing from me since her childhood, if she could see the matter in a different light. I therefore beg that the same reserve and delicacy which have done you so much honor may be preserved; that she may not be called to think upon the subject, and I cannot but express the hope that you will let it pass away from your mind.

Thus far I have been altogether serious, as the case required. I cannot conclude without a word or two in a lighter tone. If you have thoughts of marrying, do look out for some lady with a sufficient fortune for both of you. What I say to you now, I would recommend to

[1] It may have been a member of the Cookson family, or one of the Monkhouses. — Ed.

every naval officer and clergyman, who is without prospect of professional advancement. Ladies of some fortune are as easily won as those without, and for the most part as deserving. Check the first liking to those who have nothing.

Your letter will not be mentioned. I have a wretched pen and cannot procure a better, or I should be tempted to add a few words upon Rydal topics; but I must content myself with adding my sincere and ardent wishes for your health and happiness. I remain,

Very faithfully your friend and cousin,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXXVII

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

January 23, 1826.

My dear Sir,

Accept my cordial thanks for the care you have taken of my interests, and the prudent precautions your good sense and regard for me have led you to employ. Be assured that I never imputed remissness or negligence to you, and I cannot but admire the delicacy of your reserve in regard to persons of whose insolvency you had no proof. Truly do I sympathise with your probable losses upon this occasion. I will not detain you longer than to express a hope that the day may arrive when I shall be able to show, by something more substantial than words, in what degree

I am your sincere and obliged friend,

Wm. Wordsworth.

P.S. — Pray give our best regards to Mrs. Watts.

CCCCXXVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

BRINSOP COURT, NEAR HEREFORD,
Feb. 25th, 1826.

My dear Friend,

I hope you have not set me down as an ungrateful one for not having sooner thanked you for your interesting letter, and Mrs. Collier for her great kindness in sparing to me the valuable Memorials of her Tour, which — in course of time — would, I think, become more valuable for the cause which in some degree seems to reconcile you to accepting them for me; namely, that to her they are now become *melancholy* memorials. The assurance that, if her life be prolonged, she will hereafter cling with especial delight to the memory of those few weeks which cheered her declining husband's spirits, makes me unwilling to deprive her of anything that might assist her recollections; and, if you feel as I do, pray do not accept her gift, but return it to her with a thousand thanks from me. I recollect Mrs. Collier, and her hospitable kindness, when she lived in Hatton Gardens. I once dined there with you, at that time when I had travelled with you upon the coach from Bury. Perhaps this circumstance may help her to recollect something about me.

My young friend gets on slowly with the journal, therefore the prints will not be wanted for a long time; however, I will attend to your advice, and have it bound with blank leaves, so as to receive whatever prints I may be so fortunate as to pick up. You all perhaps blame me for having taken so little pains in curtailing it. I have done no more than cut out passages (sometimes pretty long ones) in giving it a hasty reading over.

It is time that I should explain the date of this letter. Here I arrived yesterday week, having parted from my brother and his daughter at Kendal just ten days before. I halted a few days at Manchester with Miss Jewsbury, the authoress of *Phantasmagoria*, etc., and was even more pleased with her at home than abroad. Her talents are extraordinary; she is admirable as a daughter and sister, and has besides many valuable friends, to some of whom I was introduced. From Manchester I came by way of Worcester, and the delightful hills of Malvern, to Hereford, where I was met by Mrs. Wordsworth's sister. Brinsop Court is six miles from Hereford, the country rich and climate good, far less rain than we have in Westmorland; but, as I have always said, our compensations do much more than make amends; our dry roads, where — after the heaviest shower — one can walk with comfort, and above all our mountains and lakes, which are just as beautiful, just as interesting in winter as in summer. Brinsop Court is, however, even now no cheerless spot, and flowers in the hedges and blossoms in the numerous orchards will soon make it gay. Our fireside is enlivened by four fine well-managed children, and cheerful friends; and Mrs. Hutchinson is one of the most pleasing and excellent of women, the sister of our good friend, Thomas Monkhouse. . . . My brother's poems are quite ready for the press, but no arrangements can be made till it is known whether Hurst and Robinson will go on, or not; and even should they promise fair, I hardly think it would be safe to conclude the bargain till the mercantile and bookselling world is a little more settled. My brother hitherto has been most fortunate. While people are suffering losses on all sides, he has wholly escaped; and with respect to the poems he was

particularly fortunate, for just before Hurst and Robinson stopped payment he had sent his first volume to Mr. Alaric Watts to be forwarded to them, and he (Mr. Watts) had the prudence to keep it back, having reason to suppose the house was tottering.

If you should write to me before all the money alarms are settled (and I hope you will, for there is no reason to expect a speedy settlement), pray tell me what you think of the Columbian bonds. Here we see no newspapers but the *Hereford Journal*, and cannot form a notion of probabilities; only I am sorry to tell you that one of Mrs. Wordsworth's sisters has had the imprudence to invest the greatest part of her property in the Columbians when at 90. We have this day heard that the dividends cannot be paid, while at the same time the price of bonds is so low that she cannot possibly think of selling out. Much as we hear of losses and *bankruptcies*, I am more grieved for my kind friend, "Joanna, that wild-hearted maid," than for any one else whom I know. . . .

No, I cannot add the sequel of poor Graham's story to my journal. It is enough for me that the knowledge of it sullies my remembrances of our bewitching voyage on the Lake of Lucerne, when the hills were wrapped in green soft gloomy light, without shadows, and again the sun burst forth in all its brilliancy. But you had more to tell, and pray let me have it. The story interested us all very much; and indeed we had expected nothing good from him.

I shall remain in Herefordshire till May if nothing unforeseen happens. My brother talks of meeting me in North Wales, and going with me to the top of Snowdon; but I do not much depend on his being able to

leave home. At all events, the time of his coming will be governed by the time of the general election. If it be put off till autumn, it will probably be the *end* of May or beginning of June before he can come. That is the time when you lawyers are busiest, I believe, otherwise you might be tempted to join us; I should be no less glad of your support on Snowdon than on St. Salvador. Adieu.

Yours truly,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXXIX

William Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, Monday,
(Postmark, March 6, 1826.)

My dear Sir,

If I am not mistaken, I lent you some time ago a copy of my little tract upon the Lakes, which contains a corrected copy of a sonnet upon "Long Meg and her Daughters." These alterations I want for the new edition of my poems. I should be glad if you would be kind enough to copy them for me, and send them.

Ever most sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXXX

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson

My dear Sir,

I am exceedingly obliged to you for the book, and happy to say I was not the least the worse for our walk to the top of Fairfield, which has left behind some

pleasant remembrances. We will read Lockhart's *Life of Burns* before next Tuesday, when we shall be very happy to see you.

William returns a thousand thanks for your kindness in sending over the dog. He had intended despatching a boy for it to-morrow morning.

In haste, believe me, truly yours,

D. WORDSWORTH.

I shall be very glad before the summer and autumn are gone by to have another mountain walk with you.

CCCCXXXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 6th April, 1826.

My dear Friend,

My sister had taken flight for Herefordshire when *your* letter, for such we guessed it to be, arrived. It was broken open (pray forgive the offence) and all your charges of concealment and reserve frustrated. We are all, at all times, so glad to hear from you that we could not resist the temptation to purchase the pleasure at the expense of the peccadillo, for which we beg pardon with united voices.

You are kind enough to mention my poems. Miscellaneous poems ought not to be jumbled together at *random*. Were this done with mine the passage from one to another would often be insupportably offensive; but in my judgment the only thing of much importance in arrangement is that one poem should shade off happily into another, and the contrasts where they occur be

clear of all harshness or abruptness. I differ from you and Lamb as to the classification of imagination, etc. It is of slight importance as matter of reflection, but great as matter of *feeling*, for the reader, by making one poem smooth the way for another. If this be not attended to, classification by subject, or by form, is of no value; for nothing can compensate for the neglect of it. When I have the pleasure of seeing you we will take this matter up, as a question of literary curiosity. Your supposed biography entertained me much. I could give you the other side. Farewell.

W. W.

CCCCXXXII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

April, 1826.

There is no material change in the classification, except that the Scotch poems have been placed all together, under the title of "Memorials of Tours in Scotland"; this has made a gap in the "Poems of Imagination" which has been supplied by *Laodamia*, *Ruth*, and one or two more, from the class of those on "The Affections."

CCCCXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Rydal Mount, April 27th, 1826.

My dear Friend,

I employ Mrs. W.'s pen for your advantage and to spare my own eyes, which are plagued with irritability. Without wasting time upon thanks, I will proceed to business.

It was very unlucky that you did not see Mr. Watts, as he could have told you everything. He negotiated for me last autumn with H. and R.; the terms, they to print one thousand copies bearing every expense, and allowing me twenty-five copies for my personal friends, and twenty-five more Mr. W. stipulated for, to be sent at his direction — or mine, if I chose to interfere — to such literary persons as might be thought likely to favour the sale of the work. The edition to be five volumes, including *The Excursion*. The sum of £150 to be paid on delivery of the copy to them, and £150 more when the work was ready for publication.

With these terms I was satisfied. But before the work was prepared Mr. W. had reason to suspect that all was not well with the firm, and prudently kept back, — with great delicacy, by the bye, — exposing himself to some censure with me for procrastination, rather than incurring the risk of injuring those whom he then only suspected. In consequence, I stand wholly disengaged. I left Longman because the terms were very disadvantageous to me, viz., they incurring all the risk, — which has been proved to me to be nothing, — and I having one half the profits, divided by themselves when they had paid themselves. I proposed other terms, which they could not accede to, nor I to the new ones proposed by them. So we parted amicably. I looked about for a more liberal and a more active publisher. Rogers concluded with Murray a verbal agreement subject to my approval, two thirds of the profit to be mine, I taking two thirds of the risk and expense. Before I closed, I wrote to inquire of Murray what that expense would amount to. Three months more elapsed without an answer, upon which I took leave of him. Observe this was before Mr. W. kindly undertook the business.

He has had a great deal of experience, and totally disapproves of my taking any part of the expense ; and I had found myself, that after the several editions had paid the expenses, — which was done in a great measure, or entirely, by a flush of sale on their first appearance, — my moiety of the profits was almost eaten away by subsequent advertising. *The Excursion* has been nearly three years out of print, and the four volumes about a year and a half ; they have been, as I know from several quarters, a good deal inquired after, so that an active publisher would have a probability of being speedily reimbursed. I know that the trade is depressed, and *perhaps* I ought not to expect quite so much as £300; but I stickle for that sum as at the best but a poor repayment for the trouble I have been at in revising the old, and adding several new poems, which, though individually of no great moment, amount on a rude guess to eight hundred or a thousand verses. Besides, I have a private reason for straining for that sum. Upon the strength of the engagement with R. and H. I was emboldened to give, for a field contiguous to my present abode, more than three times its value, for the sake of building upon it, if I thought proper. This scrap of land the pastoral Jew of whom I bought it, as if he had known of my expectation, would not yield up to me for less than £300 precisely.

I have now done, and thank you again for your kind offer. As you say that Mr. Watts has actually left town, I still look for a letter from him daily ; he was charged to commence printing the first volume immediately, if necessary, in case he was successful in bargaining in some quarter. I ought to have said that the last edition amounted only to five hundred copies. Knowing how I am at present circumstanced, you can do nothing but

make a trial where you think there is any chance of success, till we hear further from Mr. Watts. As to what you say about the negotiation being in better hands than your own, I ascribe it only to a degree of modesty rare in all men of these days, and singularly rare in men of your profession and of mine.

One word on the subject of arrangement. Lamb's order of time is the very worst that could be followed except where determined by the course of public events; or, if the subject be merely personal, in the case of juvenile poems, or those of advanced age. For example, I place the *Ode to Enterprise* among the "Poems on Imagination," which class concludes with *Tintern Abbey*, as being more admired than any other. According to my present arrangement the *Ode to Enterprise* immediately precedes it; but this is objectionable. The author cannot be supposed to be more than between six or eight and twenty when *Tintern* was written, and he must be taken for about fifty when he produced the other: so that it would perhaps be better placed elsewhere. I should like to *talk* this matter over with you, for the sake of the general principle, as affecting all the arts, in individual composition.

Do not go on to the Continent. You may carve out a much more interesting tour by taking the best part of North Wales, — and our glorious country! — on your way to Ireland; and return from the north having seen the Giant's Causeway, by Staffa and Iona, etc., to us. I am very disinterested in recommending this wide excursion, as it will allow you less time for us. But the steamboats make it irresistibly tempting, and few things would give me greater pleasure than being your companion, along with my sister, who is as keen of travelling as ever. Your account of your own sister is very melancholy, and

we truly sympathise with you; but let us bear in mind that, to the really pious, no affliction comes amiss. A religion like hers is worth all the other knowledge in the world a thousand times told. As to Italy, it seems to fly from me and mine, as it did from Æneas and his companions of old; if it can be effected we shall be right happy in your company. I say nothing of building, as not yet entered upon. Farewell. Mrs. Wordsworth joins in kindest regards. As soon as I hear from Mr. Watts I shall write again.

Affectionately and faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

P.S. — Very glad to have good news of the Lambs. Our best love to them.

CCCCXXXIV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

May, 1826.

My dear Friend,

I have just received your third letter; your second would have been answered long ago, but I have been waiting in vain for a reply to a couple addressed to Mr. Watts.

The first question is —

Are Robinson and Hurst likely to go forward again so as to make it expedient to recommence a negotiation with them? . . .

Try for an interview with Mr. Watts; he is master of all particulars, as the materials of the volumes, proposed mode of printing, etc. I will, however, mention that the

intended edition will make the eighth from the first in one volume ; the number of copies has varied from a thousand to seven hundred and five hundred. The last, published in the autumn of 1820, was five hundred, paid its expenses instantly, but was not exhausted till 1824. The prose book on the Lakes is not intended to be included, the volumes will be bulky enough without it.

I know not what more need be added. Mr. Watts has the first volume in his possession, corrected to go to press immediately ; the rest are prepared also.

Truly am I sorry to give him, and you, and my other friends so much trouble.

The poems, *The Excursion* in particular, have been far too long out of print ; Rogers' opinion is characterised by his usual good sense.

Mrs. Wordsworth's brother, who has conducted a bank for nearly forty-five years, with the highest confidence on the part of the public, has become a bankrupt through misfortune, the perfidy of a partner, and overconfidence in unworthy persons. Miss Hutchinson has not suffered, nor Mrs. Wordsworth, but some part of the family have ; in particular the late T. Monkhouse's estate would have suffered but for the overliberality of his high-minded brother, who means to bear the loss himself. This you will the more admire if you bear in mind that T. M.'s intentions towards him were frustrated by the informality of his will, made unluckily by himself. The widow is off to the Continent. If I do not build, I will strain a point to accompany you into Ireland.

Ever most faithfully,

W. W.

CCCCXXXV

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

LOWTHER CASTLE, June 18, 1826.

My dear Sir,

. . . I will with pleasure speak to Mr. De Quincey of your wish to have him among the contributors to your *Souvenir;* but, whatever hopes he may hold out, do not be tempted to depend upon him. He is strangely irresolute. A son of Mr. Coleridge lives in the neighbourhood of Ambleside, and is a very able writer; but he also, like most men of genius, is little to be depended upon. Your having taken the *Souvenir* into your own hands makes me still more regret that the general rule I have laid down precludes my endeavouring to render you any service in that way. . . .

I remain, my dear sir,

Your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXXXVI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[Written by his daughter Dora]

August, 1826.

From Llanberis mount Snowdon, and descend to Dolbarden Inn in the Vale of Llanberis, and by the lake to the romantic village of Cwm y Glo, whence to Carnarvon, Bangor, and Holyhead for Ireland; this will have shown you most of the finest things in North and South

Wales; but observe — with the exception of Conway Castle, a most magnificent thing — the whole line of the great road to Ireland from Llangollen, including Capel Curig to Bangor, would leave your knowledge of North Wales very imperfect. But this might easily be taken at some future time, when you come into the north of Ireland, by coaching through Llangollen to Bangor, thence walking to Conway, and so on by Abergele to Rhyl, from within two miles of which place is a daily steamboat to Liverpool, as there is one also from Bangor to Liverpool, a most delightful voyage of eight or nine hours. Of Ireland I can say nothing but that everybody sees Killarney. There are some fine ruins of monasteries, etc., not far from Limerick. The Vale of the Dargle and the Wicklow Mountains would be in your way from Killarney to Dublin. Supposing you to start from Dublin, you would go by Limerick, and return by the Wicklow country; but to one who should leave Wales out, the best way of seeing Ireland from London would be to go from London to Bristol, and thence to Cork, Killarney, Dublin, and the Giant's Causeway. From Belfast there will no doubt be a steamboat to Glasgow, and so on by steam to Iona and Staffa, and as much of the west of Scotland as you could conveniently see, returning by Westmorland.

I have given up all hopes of succeeding in a bargain for my poems; so they may rest. Poor Southey has lately lost his youngest daughter, a delightful creature of fourteen. Farewell. Believe me, with love from this household,

Your faithful friend,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXXXVII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Thomas De Quincey

Rydal Mount,
Thursday, 16th November, [Postmark, 1826.]

My dear Sir,

A letter of good tidings respecting Mrs. De Quincey and your family cannot, I am sure, be unwelcome; and besides, she assures me that you will be glad to hear of my safe return to Rydal after a nine months' absence. I called at your cottage yesterday, having first seen your son William at the head of the school-boys; as it might seem a leader of their noontide games, and Horace among the tribe; both as healthy-looking as the best, and William very much grown. Margaret was in the kitchen preparing to follow her brothers to school, and I was pleased to see her also looking stout and well, and much grown. Mrs. De Quincey was seated by the fire above stairs, with her baby on her knee. She rose and received me cheerfully, as a person in perfect health, and does indeed seem to have had an extraordinary recovery; and as little suffering as could be expected. The babe looks as if it would thrive, and is what we call a nice child, neither big nor little.

Mrs. De Quincey seemed on the whole in very good spirits; but, with something of sadness in her manner, she told me you were not likely to be very soon at home. She then said that you had at present some literary employments at Edinburgh; and had, besides, had an offer (or something to this effect) of a permanent engagement, the nature of which she did not know; but that you hesitated about accepting it, as it might necessitate you to

settle in Edinburgh. To this I replied, "Why not settle there for the time at least that this engagement lasts? Lodgings are cheap at Edinburgh, and provisions and coals not dear. Of these facts I had some weeks' experience four years ago." I then added that it was my firm opinion that you could never regularly keep up to your engagements at a distance from the press; and, said I, "Pray tell him so when you write." She replied, "Do write yourself." Now I could not refuse to give her pleasure by so doing, especially being assured that my letter would not be wholly worthless to you, having such agreeable news to send of your family. The little cottage and everything seemed comfortable.

I do not presume to take the liberty of advising the acceptance of this engagement, or of that; only I would venture to request you to consider well the many impediments to literary employments to be regularly carried on in limited time, at a distance from the press, in a small house, and in perfect solitude. You must well know that it is a true and faithful concern for your interests, and those of your family, that prompts me to call your attention to this point; and, if you think that I am mistaken, you will not, I am sure, take it ill that I have thus freely expressed my opinion.

It gave me great pleasure to hear of your good health and spirits, and you, I am sure, will be glad to have good accounts of all our family except poor Dora, who has been very ill indeed — dangerously ill; but now, thank God, she is gaining ground, I hope daily. Her extreme illness was during my absence, and I was therefore spared great anxiety, for I did not know of it till she was convalescent. I was, however, greatly shocked by her sickly looks. Whenever weather permits she rides on horseback. My

brother's eyes are literally quite well. This surely is as great a blessing, and I hope we are sufficiently thankful for it. He reads aloud to us by candlelight, and uses the pen for himself.

I cannot express how happy I am to find myself at home again after so long an absence, though my time has passed very agreeably, and my health been excellent. I have had many very long walks since my return, and am more than ever charmed with our rocks and mountains. Rich autumnal tints, with an intermixture of green ones, still linger on the trees.

Make my respects to Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Wilson, and believe me, my dear sir,

Yours affectionately,

D. WORDSWORTH.

One o'clock Thursday. — I have been at Grasmere, and again seen your wife. She desires me to say that she is particularly anxious to hear from you on her father's account. The newspaper continues to come directed to my brother, though before Dr. Stoddart left England my brother wrote to request that it might *not*. The new editors no doubt have wished to continue the connection with you ; but we think that it would be much better that Mrs. De Quincey should write to order it not to be sent, at least until your return to Grasmere, especially as at present you are not likely to contribute anything to the paper. She agrees with me in thinking it right so to do; and will write to the editor, unless you order to the contrary. Perhaps you will write yourself.

CCCCXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to T. Taylor

RYDAL MOUNT, 22d November, 1826.

My dear Sir,

. . . It gave me much concern to hear from Sir George Beaumont how ill you had been used. It is some consolation, however, when one supposed friend has betrayed you to find that he has created an opportunity for so many true ones to give proof of their good wishes. I shall be glad and proud to have my name enrolled in this list, upon the present occasion. . . . My volumes have long been out of print, but I believe a few copies of the quarto edition of *The Excursion* are in Mr. Longman's hands, and it is my wish to present you with one. . . .

I had the pleasure of seeing much of our common friend Sir George Beaumont, who, along with Mr. Rogers, was down here last summer. He was wonderfully well, and enjoyed his old haunts with a freshness most enviable. . . .

Very faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXXXIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

[Postmark, Dec. 8, 1826.]

Dear Sir,

It is some time since I received your little volume, for which I now return you my thanks, and also for the obliging letter that accompanied it.

Your poem I have read with no inconsiderable pleasure ; it is full of natural sentiments and pleasing pictures.

Among the minor pieces, the last pleased me much the best, and especially the latter part of it. This little volume, with what I saw of yourself during a short interview, interest me in your welfare; and the more so, as I always feel some apprehension for the destiny of those who in youth addict themselves to the composition of verse. It is a very seducing employment, and, though begun in disinterested love of the Muses, is too apt to connect itself with self-love, and the disquieting passions which follow in the train of that, our natural infirmity. Fix your eye upon acquiring independence by honourable business, and let the Muses come after, rather than go before. . . .

Excuse this freedom; and believe me, my dear sir, very faithfully,

Your obliged servant,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXL

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Rydal Mount, December 18th, 1826.

My dear Friend,

I have little to say but thanks for your lively and very interesting sketch of your Irish tour. My brother is much pleased with it, and you will not doubt (knowing my delight in travelling) that the dreary tracts you sometimes passed through did not deter me from a wish, at some period, to visit the Giant's Causeway and the Devil's Haunts, the soft lakes of Killarney, the towers, the ruins, etc. I enter entirely into your notions of Dublin, in comparison with Edinburgh; and can even sympathise with your pleasure in O'Connell's society, and think *your*

loss was gain in travelling by the wrong road, thereby securing an eight hours' discussion with that champion of the Papists, and of liberty, you will say. Well, let that pass. I will not inquire after the treason you talked; nor, if you should in an unguarded moment let it out, will I inform against you; and if ever we *should* go to Ireland I should like very well to be introduced to the domain of Derrynane,[1] and have no horror, even of the mansion and the priest, under the sanction of your guidance and my brother's protection. But Ireland, and even North Wales, do not make any part of my present travelling wishes; nor have I any that can be absolutely termed *hopes*, for my dear niece's long-delayed recovery keeps us still anxious and watchful. Not that we apprehend danger if proper means be used, but it seems nearly certain that change of air and scene will be required, as soon as weather will permit in the spring, and this conviction prevents us from looking at or contriving anything disconnected with her state of health. *She* talks with glee of Italy; but such a journey could not be accomplished without strength to begin with, and a salutary change for her may be procured at much less expense. Most likely she will be taken into Somersetshire with her mother. . . . She is very much better within the last three weeks, and rides on horseback whenever we have a fine day.

.

We expect John from Oxford this week. He was to take his degree to-day; wrote in good spirits after passing the examination, and the same post brought a satisfactory letter from his tutor, lamenting his illness in the summer — and consequent inability to study — having prevented

[1] O'Connell's home at the foot of Kenmare River in County Kerry. — Ed.

him from going up for honours, which, "from the manner he passed the examination," he had "no doubt he would have attained."

What do you say to the war? It seems there never was one which so few voices were raised against. I am afraid of the French proving false, — that is, of their seeking occasion to quarrel with us, — and if we once begin to fight with them again, farewell to peace.

When you see Charles and Mary Lamb, give our kindest regards to them. I wish they would now and then let us see their handwriting; a single page from Charles Lamb is worth ten postages. However, it is well to hear good tidings, and we have no right to complain of their silence. Your assurance that they were well, and in good spirits, gave us great satisfaction.

My brother does really intend, by the same lady who conveys this to London, to write to Longman respecting the publishing of his poems. I heartily wish that an agreement, and speedy printing, may follow. He has lately written some very good sonnets. I wish that I could add that *The Recluse* was brought from his hiding-place.

Your grateful and affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

Have you chanced to see Miss Coleridge? She is in London. The Southeys are well. Mrs. Coleridge is in sad spirits about her son Hartley. He has been on his wanderings nearly a month. Derwent has a curacy in Cornwall; report speaks well of his performances in the pulpit.

1827

CCCCXLI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 6th January, 1827.

My dear Friend,

. . . You once met, at Southey's, a Mr. Kenyon ; and, having met, I think cannot have forgotten him. Oh, no ! *that* you *cannot;* for it has just come into my recollection that he dined with us in Gloucester Place in 1820 when the wedding cake was cut, — a sort of Christmas feast before its time, — when poor Thomas Monkhouse, Charles Lamb, my brother, and you made a company of sleepers after dinner. Was he, or was he not, there? When I began this notice I surely thought he was ; but my sister, who sits beside me, says not, and now I begin to doubt. Well, this same Mr. Kenyon has written to my sister for the family interest, and I will, as the easiest mode of explaining, quote from his own letter: "The fact is, I am desirous (I will not say anxious, the word would be unduly strong) to be a member of the Athenæum Club, and am to be balloted for on Monday the 5th of February. On looking over the list of members I see some names of your friends, amongst them that of H. C. Robinson, your travelling companion, and Allan Cunningham. If these gentlemen are likely to be in London at that time, perhaps I might be allowed to ask your interest with them

to give me their votes, and their interest, on this occasion. You may venture to represent me as a man who will not steal the silver spoons, who does not wear creaking shoes, and as a good listener, etc." He adds, "Sir George Beaumont and Rogers, I see, both belong to the club; but these are old men not to be teased to think of trifles, or to go out on a February evening."

.

I was happy to hear of Tom Clarkson being in perfect health, with increasing business; and why does not the marriage take place? Thus people wait till "All the life of life is gone."

I have some good tidings for you of my brother. . . . Longman has agreed to his terms, and the poems are to go to press immediately, and proceed with all possible speed.

The weather is now as wintry as it can be. Ponds are all frozen and thronged with skaters and sliders; the Lakes not yet frozen, strong winds have prevented this. My brother is Christmassing at Sedbergh with his son John at his (John's) old schoolmaster's. We expect them home again on Monday.

I have to-day received a letter from my nephew John[1] (of Cambridge). He says: "You will be pleased to hear that my father is gradually gaining ground, in spite of the troubles and anxieties of his Vice-Chancellorship. The improvement in his appearance, however, has not kept pace with that of his strength, and any person who should judge of him by his looks would not form a just estimate of his progress. His face is thin and wrinkled, and he says of himself, 'I can count all my bones'; but his spirits are

[1] Son of the Master of Trinity. — Ed.

good, and, I think, his strength fully re-established, and he takes great pains to convince himself and others that the state of thinness is favourable to health." I suppose you know that this good brother of mine was dangerously ill in the summer.

Believe me, ever your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXLII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

29th January, 1827.

My dear Friend,

. . . My poems have, for this month past, been printing with the Longmans upon the same terms as agreed upon with M. With this latter my dealings have been as follows: Rogers, after waiting for a half a year, came to the preliminaries of an arrangement, that M. should publish for one third of the profits, meeting one third of the expense. Upon this I wrote to know what the expense would be, and waited a long time, many months, without getting an answer. I then wrote to M. that, not hearing from him, I felt myself at liberty to enter into a treaty elsewhere. Accordingly I did so with Hurst, etc. Their failing last year stopped this, and something more than two months since I wrote to M. offering him the work upon the old terms and begging an immediate answer, which, I told him, if I did not receive, I should regard his silence as evidence that the engagement did not suit him. I waited about a month, and receiving no answer wrote to Longmans, and then went to press immediately upon the terms mentioned.

You see, then, I can have little to say to M. It is remarkable that by the same post as brought your letter I had one from Colonel Pasley, in which he had occasion to speak of M.'s inattention as a publisher, and his displeasing manners, so that he broke with him; for my own part, upon the whole, I am as well pleased that the book should be where it is, for M. and I, I am persuaded, could never agree. So that you will treat the matter with him as you think proper; only it is fit I should say I have no wish but to be civil and upon friendly terms with him. I have revised the poems carefully, particularly *The Excursion*, and I trust with considerable improvement; but you will judge.

The deaths you mention among your friends gave me much concern. Flaxman's I had heard of through the public papers, A. Robinson's not till you named it. Thanks for your exertions on behalf of our amiable friend Kenyon; we have procured him several votes, and I would have got many more, but my parliamentary and fashionable friends are almost all out of town.

CCCCXLIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

29th January, 1827.

My dear Friend,

My brother has given me this most elegant epistle of his to fold up and finish. I have little to say but to confirm his account of poor Dora. My brother's heart would be as much fixed as ever upon Italy, were not anxiety kept almost constantly alive. It is our decided opinion that she ought not to pass the next winter here, and all schemes must give way to her benefit.

My brother wishes his son John's name to be put down as a candidate for membership of the University Club. He has taken his Bachelor's degree, and is of *New College*. Perhaps you may have in town some University friend, a member of the club, whom you can oblige my brother by asking to do this service. . . . You do not mention Charles Lamb and his sister; I trust they continue not worse than when he wrote to me a most pleasant letter. Miss Lamb was then quite well, but he was sadly afflicted with the cramp. The detail of his sufferings was mixed with so much drollery that it was impossible not to laugh, though we were and are heartily sorry that he should have such torments to endure. His connection with the British Museum is the best thing possible, supplying every need that his withdrawing from the India House caused him to feel. Pray return him, for all of us, a thousand thanks for his letter, with our love to him and his sister. My sister, Miss Hutchinson, Dora, and Willy join with me in best wishes.

Ever your affectionate and much obliged friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXLIV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

18th February, 1827.

My dear Friend,

A frank tempts me to slip in our united thanks for your zeal in the cause of our friend, Mr. Kenyon. I assure you, as the French say, it has not been bestowed upon an ingrate, as you will yourself perceive if ever you meet him at the club. He will then, I am sure, be glad

to hold discourse with you, and to tell you how much he has been pleased by your kindness and that of others of our friends. It does indeed appear that he came in with a "high hand."

My brother is much obliged to you, and to your friend, Mr. Rolfe, for getting John's name put on the University Club's boards, and will be further obliged if you will place him on those of the Athenæum. It *may* be useful, and can do no harm.

He is now at Oxford studying divinity, and we hope the result will be a steady determination to apply himself to the duties of a minister of our church.

The printing of the poems goes on rapidly. My brother inserts your note (I believe without any alteration), only, perhaps, something may be added to it; and, besides, one or two extracts will, I think, be inserted from our journals as notes to some other poems. . . . A heavy snow is now on the ground, and still falling. We hope a thaw will follow. Nothing can exceed the purity of the scene now before my eyes. How different to you in London, if the same snow is falling on the streets and houses!

The death of Sir George Beaumont is a great affliction to us, and was also a severe shock; for when he was at Rydal in the summer, and when I parted from him at Coleorton at the end of October, he was in as good health and spirits as he has ever been since we first knew him twenty-three years ago, and appeared as likely to live for eight years to come as any of our younger friends, though his seventy-third birthday was on the 6th of November. . . . Dear Lady Beaumont has been wonderfully supported hitherto, but I fear the worst for her is yet to come, and that strength and spirits may wholly fail; for she is of a

weak bodily constitution, and after having lived with a husband fifty years in perfect harmony, sharing in all his pursuits, the change must be dreadful, — and *such* a husband!

Sir George Beaumont was buried on Wednesday, just a week after his death. His illness was short, I believe not more than ten days. Charles and Mary Lamb will, I know, sympathise with us. They knew and highly valued our inestimable friend. Give our love to them.

In haste, ever your affectionate

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXLV

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

[Postmark, March 20, 1827.]

My dear Montagu,

First I received four volumes of your Lord Byron, and then separately, through the hands of Mr. Strickland Cookson, I believe, the fifth. No more have reached me ; if the sixth has been sent through the same channel as the fifth it ought to be inquired after ; otherwise a set may be broken. I had a letter from Mr. S. Cookson about a fortnight ago and he made no mention of another volume having reached him.

I have nothing important to observe on your preface. It is judicious and written with spirit. The head of "Ignorance" as an objection to change is not, I think, so well treated as the rest. "Habit" ought to have been distinctly stated as giving an undue weight to the reasons which may exist for continuing practises for which better might be substituted. Weighty must habit be when it has anything of reason to aid it, if the poor Italian can

through its influence alone be so absurd as your story represents. Are you aware that the horrid practise of wife-sacrifice in India is the result of the policy of the polygamist husband to guard his own life from the attacks of the malcontents among his numerous wives, by making it a point of honour that such sacrifice should take place upon his decease? The natural dread of death gives the whole band an interest in prolonging his existence.

Ever sincerely yours,

W. W.

CCCCXLVI

William Wordsworth to J. Fletcher

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR AMBLESIDE,
12th April, 1827.

Dear Sir,

It was gratifying to be remembered after your long and interesting wandering. I shall take care of your obliging letter, and if my fortune should ever prove favourable to my wishes by allowing me to revisit the Alps, I trust I shall profit by some of your notices. I wish you had been a little more particular upon the scenery of the Apennines about which there is much disagreement of opinion. In Alpine Switzerland I think there is a good deal of sameness. Switzerland must be taken altogether. The Jura, its valleys, and the views of the Alps and the intermediate plain from its eminences never can be forgotten; and in thinking of the Alps one should always bear in mind both their Helvetian and Italian features, otherwise great injustice is done to that region which is the pride not only of Europe but of the globe. Fine scenery is more widely spread perhaps than you are

willing to allow; though not in Europe, yet think of the Pyrenees, and many parts of Portugal and Spain.

Never scarcely was any region so overpraised as "La *belle* France." Its climate is good, but all the interior is tame. It has been well compared to a shawl, of which the beauty and interest are all in the border. I have heard the bold coast and deep inlets of Norway praised as the finest things in Europe. Sir Humphry Davy was particularly lavish in extolling them. I write in haste. Let me beg that if you should be drawn this way, you would favour me with your company, when we may talk over these things. With warm thanks,

I remain, dear sir,

Very sincerely, your obliged

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXLVII

Mary Wordsworth to John Kenyon

August 28, 1827.

My dear Friend,

Having lost sight of you for so long a time, we had concluded that you and yours were in progress towards the Immortal City, until the letter, received on Sunday, proved to us that you are still on this side the channel, yet so near that I should not be surprised to hear, at any moment, that you had taken flight across. Dover must be a tantalizing situation to those whose desires have so long dwelt upon foreign travel — to see those *steamers* daily fuming backwards and forwards! How can you resist them? Otherwise those ever varying scenes must be a constant source of amusement and interest, and we think you

could not have made a better choice, unless indeed you had pitched your tent, for a time, among the lakes and mountains. But we think you have some prudential considerations for delaying to introduce Mrs. K. to people of our stamp. As far as we are concerned the dreams of Italy are passed away, but they may, and I hope will, revive again for you. I hope that no untoward event may stand in the way of the accomplishment of your wishes next year.

From Idle Mount, which just now well supports that title, I have nothing but good to communicate; and to begin with the best of good things, let me tell you — which I do with a thankful heart — that W.'s eyes are quite well. How this good work was wrought you shall hear when we meet. Dora, whom you so kindly inquire after, is no longer an invalid; she is become as strong as I ever remember her to have been, but this happy state is only to be depended upon so long as the beautiful weather lasts. She is a complete *air* gage. As soon as damp is felt, the trouble in her throat returns; something connected with the trachea, that causes a cough and other inconveniences. To keep this enemy aloof, she is not to winter in our weeping climate; therefore before the next rainy season sets in, perhaps in a very few weeks, she with myself for her attendant are to quit our pleasant home and friends; but we mean to go to others, and make ourselves as joyous as we can. Our first and longest sojourn will be with my brother at Brinsop Court, near Hereford. (Had we met you in the Cathedral, or wandering upon the Wye, how lucky we should have thought ourselves!) We shall visit Mrs. Gee near Bristol, and, had you not so rashly given up your home at Bath, we should not have been so near without partaking for a few days of

your and Mrs. Kenyon's hospitality. You will say, what is to become of Mr. W. all this time? This thought I do not encourage, except when we plan a scheme for meeting at Coleorton, or for his joining us in Herefordshire. We are looking for Miss Wordsworth's return home, after a two months' absence, towards the end of the week. She will be stationed throughout the winter at R. M., as will also, I believe, my sister Sarah, John, and Willy. Willy has grown, as you suspect, amazingly, though he has not yet reached his father's height. John intends to take orders as soon as he can meet with a curacy. Should you hear of any vacancy in a good neighbourhood, where the duty is not too heavy for a novice to undertake, you perhaps will be kind enough to let him know, and you might also say a good word for him.

My sister Sarah, Dora, and Mr. Quillinan — who has been our guest for the last few days — have ridden over to Keswick this morning. Southey's family are all well. I, together with Dora, spent a week very pleasantly with them since the commencement of the present month, and we also had a picnic meeting under Raven Crag by the margin of Wytheburn; the families of Greta Hall and Rydal Mount, with other vagrants, making a party of about thirty. A merry group we formed, round a gypsy fire upon the rocky point that juts from the shore, on the opposite side of the lake from the high road.

Dr. Wordsworth's three *distinguished* sons[1] are now at Bowness, reading with several other students and their tutor. Except after the business of the week is over, on the Saturdays and Sundays, we see nothing of them. They

[1] Christopher, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln; John, referred to at p. 460; and Charles, afterwards Bishop of St. Andrews. — Ed.

are delightful youths, and have learnt — or rather time has taught them — to enjoy this country, which they thought little of when they were last in it, the summer you were here I think. Tillbrook made but a short stay, and was very unlucky, having imprudently taken too long a walk, to show the view into Langdale to a young friend, and fatigued himself so much as obliged him almost to keep to his sofa during the remainder of his stay. He was only twice up the hill.

The Bishop of Chester and his lady took possession of Ivy Cot about three weeks since, and mean to make it their headquarters until October. The bishop is a delightful companion, and is indefatigable in the duties of his high office. He preaches every Sunday, often twice, in some or other of the neighbouring churches, — a grand feast for us, who are so often doomed to feed on such a slender meal as our Westmorland divines lay before us. Mrs. Blomfield, too, is a pleasant agreeable person, but they are so much engaged among the grandees of the neighbourhood that we do not see much of them; besides, she is delicate, and the "Hall bank" is too much for her.

The house at the foot of the hill is at present empty but Fox Ghyll, beautified by Mrs. Luff, is a delightful residence. Spring Cottage, the second house under Loughrigg upon the river, is occupied by two maiden ladies, who are admirers of *scenery*, and understand the *ologies*. In the latter *we* do not participate. The sciences do not flourish at Idle Mount. Thus you see that if the travellers did not steal our industrious propensities from us, our neighbours would.

Here you must refer to the numerals for directions how to proceed, for, till I had written to the end of the third page, I did not discover I had turned over two sheets,

after reaching the bottom of the first; and to this blunder you owe this long letter, for I should not have ventured beyond a single sheet, although I can command a frank.

With best regards to Mrs. K. and kindest remembrances from all, believe me to be,

Very sincerely yours,

M. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXLVIII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR KENDAL,
September 24, 1827.

You will have no pain to suffer from my sincerity. With a safe conscience I can assure you that, in my judgment, your verses are animated with true poetic spirit, as they are evidently the product of strong feeling. The sixth and seventh stanzas affected me much, even to the dimming of my eye, and faltering of my voice while I was reading them aloud. . . . You will not, I am sure, be hurt, when I tell you that the workmanship is not what it ought to be,

> Some *touch* of human sympathy find way,
> And whisper that while Truth's and Science' *ray*
> With such serene effulgence o'er thee shone —

Sympathy might whisper, but a *touch* of sympathy could not. "Truth's and Science' ray," for the ray of Truth and Science, is not only extremely harsh, but a "ray *shone*" is, if not absolutely a pleonasm, a great awkwardness; a "ray may be said to fall or 'shoot'"; and *a sun*, or *a moon*, or *a candle* to shine, but not a ray. I much regret that I did

not receive these verses while you were here; that I might have given you *viva voce* a comment upon them which would be tedious by letter, and, after all, very imperfect. If I have the pleasure of seeing you again, I will beg permission to dissect these verses, or any other you may be inclined to show me; but I am certain that, without conference with me, or any benefit drawn from my practise in metrical composition, your own high powers of mind will lead you to the main conclusions; you will be brought to acknowledge that the logical faculty has infinitely more to do with poetry than the young and the inexperienced, whether writer or critic, ever dreams of. Indeed, as the materials upon which that faculty is exercised in poetry are so subtle, so plastic, so complex, the application of it requires an adroitness which can proceed from nothing but practise; a discernment, which emotion is so far from bestowing that at first it is ever in the way of it. . . . Here I must stop; only let me advert to two lines:

> But shall despondence therefore *blench* my *brow*,
> Or pining sorrow sickly ardour o'er.

These are two of the worst lines in mere expression. "Blench" is perhaps miswritten for "blanch"; if not, I don't understand the word. *Blench* signifies to flinch. If "blanch" be the word, the next ought to be "*hair*." You can't here use *brow* for the *hair* upon it, because a white brow or forehead is a beautiful characteristic of youth. "Sickly ardour o'er" was at first reading to me unintelligible. I took "sickly" to be an adjective joined with "ardour," whereas you mean it as a portion of a verb, from Shakespeare, "Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." But the separation of the parts or decomposition of the word, as here done, is not to be endured.

Let me now come to your sister's verses, for which I thank you. They are surprisingly vigorous for a female pen, but occasionally too rugged, and especially for such a subject; they have also the same fault in expression as your own, but not I think in quite an equal degree. Much is to be hoped from feelings so strong, and from a mind thus disposed. I should have entered into particulars with these also, had I seen you after they came into my hands. Your sister is, no doubt, aware that in her poem she has trodden the same ground as Gray, in his *Ode upon a Distant Prospect of Eton College.* What he has been contented to treat in the abstract she has represented in particulars, and with admirable spirit. Again, my dear sir, let me exhort you (and do you exhort your sister) to deal little with modern writers, but fix your attention almost exclusively upon those who have stood the test of time. You especially have not leisure to allow of your being tempted to turn aside from the right course by deceitful lights. . . .

W. W.

CCCCXLIX

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

1827.

Perhaps the fate of the bill[1] is already decided, or will be so, before this reaches your hands. I cannot forbear, however, writing once more upon a subject which is scarcely ever out of my thoughts. I see that a writer in the *Quarterly Review* is most decidedly against the bill going into committee: he appears convinced, as thousands are, that no good would arise from it, and that the

[1] The Reform Bill. — Ed.

destruction of the Constitution must follow; adding that if the Lords resist they will at least fall with honour. In this I perfectly concur with him. . . . Residing at a distance from town, I can form no distinct notion of the mischief which might immediately arise, with an executive such as now afflicts this kingdom. But I do confidently affirm that there are materials for constructing a party which, if the bill be not passed, might save the country. I have numerous acquaintances among men who have all their lives been more or less of Reformers, but not one, unfastened by party engagements, who does not strongly condemn this bill.

CCCCL

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

November 29, 1827.

. . . The nation will now know what Lord Grey meant by his expression, "a measure equally efficient." If he meant efficient for a change as great, as sudden, and upon the same principles of spoliation and disfranchisement in the outset as the former bill — and the new constituency to be supplied by its coarse and clumsy contrivances, not to speak of the party injustice of their application — then it must be obvious to all honest men of sound judgment that nothing can prevent a subversion of the existing government by King, Lords, and Commons, and the violation of the present order of society in this country. Such at least is the deliberate opinion of all those friends whose judgment I am accustomed to look up to. One of the ablest things I have read upon

the character and tendency of the Reform Bill is in the *North American Review* of four or five months back. The author lays it down — and I think gives irrefragable reasons for his opinion — that the numerical principle adopted, and that of property also, can find no root but in universal suffrage. Being a Republican, and a professed hater and despiser of our modified feudal institutions, he rejoices over the prospect, and his views, though in some points mistaken, for want of sufficient knowledge of English society, are entitled to universal consideration.

CCCCLI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

. . . The altered bill does little or nothing to prevent the dangers of the former. . . . The mischief already done can never be repaired. The scheme of regulating representation by arbitrary lines of property or numbers is impracticable; such distinctions will melt away before the inflamed passions of the people. No government will prove sufficiently strong to maintain them, till the novelty which excites a thirst for further change shall be worn off, and the new constituency have a chance of acquiring by experience the habits of a temperate use of their powers. A preponderance so large being given to ten-pound renters, the interest and property of the large towns where they are to vote will not be represented, much less that of the community at large; for these ten-pound renters are mainly men without substance, and live, as has been said, from hand to mouth. Then will follow frequent Parliaments — triennial perhaps at first — which will convert the representatives into mere slavish

delegates, as they now are in America, under the dictation of ignorant and selfish numbers, misled by unprincipled journalists, who, as in France, will — no few of them — find their way into the House of Commons, and so the last traces of a deliberative assembly will vanish. But enough of this melancholy topic. I resided fifteen months in France, during the heat of the Revolution, and have some personal experience of the course which these movements must take, if not fearlessly resisted, before the transfer of legislative power takes place. . . .

CCCCLII

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

[Trinity College, Cambridge.]

My dear Brother,

. . . I have a proposal to make. We quit this place Saturday week, meaning to stop two days at Birmingham, two at Worcester with Miss Wills, Lady B.'s cousin, and one at Malvern if the snow be not on the ground. Our earnest wish is, that you should join us at Brinsop Court, Mr. Hutchinson's, about six miles from Hereford, where I will meet you with a gig. My stay will be prolonged in that country sufficiently to allow of our passing a week together, divided between Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Monkhouse, who lives at no distance from him on the banks of the Wye. You would have a saddle horse or a gig at command, while in that part of the country. . . .

Most affectionately yours,

W. W.

To this letter Wordsworth wrote a postscript to his nephew Christopher, in which the following occurs:

My dear Chris.,

. . . As to the Virgil,[1] I have no objection to its being printed if two or three good judges would previously take the trouble of looking it over, and they should think it worth while. Could Mr. Hare find time for that purpose, he or any others? On the other side I have given you a few corrections, and shall be glad of any of yours, or those of anybody else. . . .

Most affectionately your uncle,

W. WORDSWORTH.

The following is crossed over the page.

This way and that the { vulgar / many } are inclined,
Split into parties by the fickle mind.
Where hast thou tarried, Hector? from what coast
Com'st thou long-wished for? After thousands lost,
Thy kindred and thy friends such travail borne
By all that breathe in Troy, how tired and worn
We who behold thee! But why *thus* return?
These gashes whence? This undeserved disgrace!
Who first defiled that calm majestic face?
My heart misgave me not, nor did mine eye
Look back till we had reached the boundary
Of ancient Ares.

Have the goodness to insert the above correction in your copy, if not for preference at least for choice.

W. W.

[1] Evidently his translation of part of the first book of the *Æneid*, for which see *Poetical Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 276. It was published in the *Philological Museum* in 1836. The passage quoted below does not occur in what is printed in the *Poetical Works* and the *Philological Museum*. — Ed.

1828

CCCCLIII

William Wordsworth to Mary, and Dora Wordsworth

Thursday, [1828.]

Dearest M. and D.,

From what I learn Mrs. Gee is left in such narrow circumstances that on that account alone it will be better not to stay more than three weeks with her at Hendon.[1]

I could wish to assist Mrs. Gee, tell her, in disposing of her portion of the Langdale estate, but you are aware that no complete title can be made to it till little Mary M. is of age, so that I fear it will be almost an insurmountable objection. I will try. I shall be hurt if you do not so contrive as to spend at least a month at Cambridge with Dr. W.[2] It is not necessary that I should be there to meet you. I will follow as soon as I can. . . . John arrived the day before yesterday, looking well and apparently in good spirits. Bills to the amount of upwards of £60, including the one paid by Mr. Jackson, have been sent for battles, etc.

This was my main inducement for closing with Mr. Reynold's offer for *The Keepsake*.[3] I have already written

[1] Mrs. Gee had a girls' school at Hendon, which Dora Wordsworth had attended. — Ed.

[2] The Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, the poet's brother. — Ed.

[3] Wordsworth sent to *The Keepsake* four poems, viz., *The Triad*, *The Wishing-Gate*, *Miserrimus*, and *The Gleaner*. — Ed.

all that will be necessary to fulfill my engagement, but I wish to write a small narrative poem by way of variety, in which case I shall defer something of what is already written till another year, if we agree.

I have written one little piece, thirty-four lines, on the picture of a beautiful peasant-girl bearing a sheaf of corn.[1] The person I had in my mind lives near the Blue Bell, Fillingham — a sweet creature; we saw her going to Hereford.

Another piece, eighty-two lines, same stanza as *Ruth*, is entitled *The Wishing-Gate at Grasmere*.[2] Both have, I think, merit. . . .

William continues in good spirits and sufficiently industrious. . . .

I will add for Dora a few additional lines for *The Promise*,[3] that is the title of the poem. After "Where grandeur is unknown," add —

> What living man would fear
> The worst of Fortune's malice, wert thou near,
> Humbling that lily-branch, thy sceptre meek,
> To brush from off his cheek
> The too, too happy tear?
> Queen and handmaid lowly! etc.

Before "Next to these shades a Nymph," etc., read this:

> Like notes of birds that after showers
> In April concert try their powers,
> And with a tumult and a rout
> Of warbling, force coy Phœbus out;

[1] The original title was *The Gleaner* (*suggested by a picture*). — Ed.

[2] The title, alike in *The Keepsake* and in the *Poems* of 1832, was simply *The Wishing-Gate*. — Ed.

[3] The original title of *The Triad*. — Ed.

Or bid some dark cloud's bosom show
That form divine, the many coloured bow,
E'en so the thrillings of the lyre
Prevail to further our desire,
While to these shades a nymph I call,
The youngest of the lovely three:
With glowing cheek from pastimes virginal
Behold her hastening to the tents
Of nature, and the lonely elements!
And, as if wishful to disarm
Or to repay the tuneful charm,
She bears the stringed lute of old Romance, etc.

For "With the *happy* rose enwreathed," on account of the "happy tear" above, read "With *Idalian* rose."

Read thus:

Only ministers to quicken
Sallies of instinctive wit;
Unchecked in laughter-loving gaiety,
In all the motions of her spirit, free.

Farewell, dearest loves. I have shown the above additions to nobody, even in this house; so I shall shut up my letter that neither it nor they may be read. Love to all at both houses. Again farewell.

Your affectionate husband and father,

W. W.

Sunday Morning, 9 o'clock.

My dearest Dora,

I am looking for Mr. Quillinan every moment. I hope to revive the conversation of yesterday.

The sum is: I make no opposition to this marriage. I have no resentment connected with it toward any one;

you know how much friendship I have always felt towards Mr. Q., and how much I respect him. I do not doubt the strength of his love and affection towards you; this, as far as I am concerned, is the fair side of the case.

On the other hand, I cannot think of parting with you with that complacency, that satisfaction, that hopefulness which I could wish to feel; there is too much of necessity in the case for my wishes. But I must submit, and do submit; and God Almighty bless you, my dear child, and him who is the object of your long and long-tried preference and choice.

Ever your affectionate father,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Thursday.

Your letter to me just received. Thanks; I will write from Brinsop. W. W.

My dear Daughter,

The letter which you must have received from William has placed before you my judgment and feelings; how far you are reconciled to them I am unable to divine. I have only to add that I believe Mr. Q. to be a most honourable and upright man, and further, that he is most strongly and faithfully attached to you; this I must solemnly declare in justice to you both; and to this I add *my blessing upon you and him;* more I cannot do, and if this does not content you with what your brother has said, we must all abide by God's decision upon our respective fates. Mr. Q. is, I trust, aware how slender my means are. The state of William's health will undoubtedly entail upon us considerable expense, and how John

is to get on without our aid I cannot foresee. No more at present, my time is out; I am going to join Miss Fenwick at Miss Pollard's.

Ever your most tender-hearted and affectionate father,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

In a beautiful churchyard near Bath I saw, the other day, this inscription:

THOMAS CARROL, ESQ.,
BARRISTER AT LAW
Born — so, died — so.
Rest in peace, dear Father.

There was not another word.

CCCCLIV

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

BRINSOP COURT, NEAR HEREFORD,
January 9th, 1828.

My dear Sir,

Has my friend Mr. Quillinan lately ordered a copy of my bust from you? If not, be so good as to have one cast for him, which I will pay for; he having left the one he possessed in Westmoreland for a connection of mine. I shall also want a bust for one of my nephews, who has lately distinguished himself at Oxford, and has just been elected a student of Christ Church — where he has rooms as long as he chooses to remain unmarried. When my other two nephews who are now of Cambridge are likely to be as far settled as their brother, I shall want a bust for each of them. In the meanwhile be so kind as to have one executed as carefully as you can for Mr. Quillinan, who will be directed to call upon you; and let the other

be sent to Charles Wordsworth, Esq., Christ Church, Oxford. I shall be in Town in spring, when I will take care to discharge my debt for these busts; and will also take such steps as may ensure the payment of the one which, at Mr. Coleridge's request, — I mean Mr. Edward Coleridge of Eaton, — I begged might be cast for him, and which was accordingly sent to him at that place by you; but perhaps he has himself discharged the debt.

In the letter I had the pleasure of receiving from you some time ago, you recur to the scheme of a selection from my poems for circulation among the Scotch peasantry. When we meet I will talk this over with you, and we will discuss its practicability. I should myself be wholly at a loss what pieces to fix upon for such persons. I am happy to see that your pen continues busy, but scarcely any new books find their way to me in Westmoreland. I am at present on a visit to a brother-in-law, with whom my wife and daughter are residing for the winter. . . .

Believe me, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLV

William Wordsworth to John Taylor

Rydal Mount, Jan. 30, 1828.

My dear Sir,

. . . I have also to thank you for an exhortation urging me to pay a tribute to the memory of our departed friend, Sir G. Beaumont. Be assured I feel strongly on the subject; but even from that very cause one often shrinks from what might prove an unworthy attempt. . . .

CCCCLVI

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

RYDAL MOUNT, February 26, 1828.

My dear Sir,

You are too late in your application. I have been disagreeably circumstanced in respect to these publications. One of my friends, the conductor of a public journal, applied to me some time ago for contributions. I refused on the ground that I had never been engaged on any periodical, nor meant to be. A gentleman whom I have not the honour of knowing, but to whom I am under considerable obligations, is editor of one of these annuals, and had a claim upon me, though he did not ask for a contribution, nor did I contribute, for the same general reason. I have since had applications, I believe, from nearly every editor, but complied with none. I have, however, been smuggled into the *Winter's Wreath*, to which I contributed three years ago, it being then intended as a solitary publication for charitable purposes. (The two pieces of mine which appeared there had some months before been published by myself in the last edition of the poems.) This having broken the ice, I had less reluctance to close with a proposal the other day made me by Mr. Reynolds, the terms of which were too liberal to be easily resisted. . . . Mr. Sharp is entitled to the gratitude of the poets of England for the elegant, and above all — for what I am told is the case — the very correct editions published by him.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Very faithfully, your much obliged friend,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLVII

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

RYDAL MOUNT, March 7th, 1828.

My dear Friend,

I am sorry to find you rate my assistance so high. It would give me great pleasure to meet your wishes, but I see little hope of it at present, even if the terms on which alone I should feel myself at liberty to contribute could be acceded to by you. Much as I should value the bronze bust, it is a mode of remuneration too indefinite for my present engagement. Considering the sums offered by Mr. Heath to literary men, I think it might be imprudent to enter into competition with him as far as authorship goes; unless the proprietor (or proprietors) of your work be prepared to enter upon it with a capital that would allow a heavy expenditure for this branch only, though with the embellishment comparatively insignificant.

I speak to you as *editor* alone. The proprietors of some of these works have made large sums by them, and it is reasonable that the writers should be paid in some proportion.

For my own part I acknowledge that a wish to gratify you, and I feel it very strongly, comes and must come second upon an occasion like this. It is a matter of trade. All my natural feelings are against appearing before the public in this way. Having spoken thus frankly, I dismiss the subject. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

Steel engraving has given birth to these publications, and the immense number of impressions of the plates which it allows must be the support of those that succeed. It is therefore politic not to starve the authorship, which after all forms but a small part of the expense.

CCCCLVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, Thursday, September 25th, [1828.]

My dear Sir,

I was very sorry to find you had not seen my brother at Mr. Tilbrook's when you were last here, and that you were gone when I inquired for you. It was indeed very unlucky that you should have come at a time when so many strangers were gathered together at Rydal Mount.

I now write for two reasons. In the first place, to say I hope to ascend Helvellyn with you before my departure to Whitwick, and in the second, to request that you will bring with you my *Scotch Tour* when you come — if you have not an opportunity of sending it before, by some individual whom you can depend upon, for leaving it at Rydal Mount — who will give it into the hands of one of our servants, or other person of the family, to be delivered to Miss Wordsworth, Sr.

We are at present in want of the *Journal*, but (it not being here) there is no need that you should trouble yourself to send it purposely. A week or two now will make no difference.

Next week we expect company. But after that time my brother and I will be at perfect liberty to climb Helvellyn with you any fine morning when you may happen

to arrive. Come by half-past eight o'clock, and if on a Keswick-coach day, so much the better, as we could go on the coach to Dunmail Raise. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are the days on which the coach goes to Keswick.

I shall depart towards Leicestershire about the first week in November, therefore the sooner you come the better, after next week.

With kind respects from all the family, and my brother especially, who much regretted he did not see you,

I remain,

Yours truly,

D. WORDSWORTH, SR.

CCCCLIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, Tuesday, 9th October, [1828.]

My dear Sir,

The weather seems now to be clearing up; but I am sorry to say we cannot ascend Helvellyn this week on account of engagements; and next week also we are engaged for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; but should Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday prove fine, we should be glad to accompany you on any one of those days, for we give up the coach scheme, and intend to take the pony chaise as far as the Nag's Head.[1]

I am, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

D. WORDSWORTH.

[1] The inn at Wytheburn. — Ed.

CCCCLX

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

Nov. 11th, [1828.]

My dear Friend,

I send back your preface with two or three verbal alterations; there is no need of Mr. Southey's assistance. It will do as it is. I wish the Selection[1] may answer the purpose — for myself I can form no conjecture. I congratulate you on the success of your *Annual.* I am engaged on the same terms for *The Keepsake*, and am not quite easy under the engagement, as I have not written a line, nor am I in possession of one which would answer their purpose; so that I really could not promise a contribution to any other work of the kind, were the publishers prepared to pay me at the rate which I am at liberty to accept. I regret this both on your account, and for Mr. Alaric Watts, whom I wished to serve. I send you back your own letter, thinking it may save you some trouble of transcription. I see that *Simon Lee* is down on your list. I could wish that piece to be slightly altered thus. The second stanza to stand as the fourth, thus altered.

> But oh the heavy change! bereft
> Of strength of friends and kindred, see

The next stanza to begin thus:

> And he is lean.

[1] This must refer to a projected volume of Selections which was never issued. — Ed.

. . . Is the bust [1] sent off to Mr. Charles Wordsworth, Christ Church, Oxon? Do you know the address of Mr. James Wilson of Edinburgh, brother to the professor? He wishes one to be sent to him to Edinburgh by sea.

CCCCLXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 28th November.

My dear Friend,

Welcome to England, and thanks for your interesting letter which will be carefully preserved with its predecessors of the same class in my sister's possession. Your account of the Pyrenean valleys falls in pretty much with my own expectation. I never heard of but one person, Walter Savage Landor, who preferred the Pyrenees to the Alps. Have you read Raymond's account of the former? It is well worth looking over, more for the beauty of particular passages, than for its general interest or its merit (as far as I am able to judge) as an acquisition to geology. It is, however, on this account that the author seems to pride himself. His translation of Coxe, I think, I recommended to you before. I am now about to consult you on my son William's present destination; and to come to the point at once I want to place him in some establishment on the Continent, or rather make some family arrangement with a Protestant clergyman who has two or three pupils, not less than sixteen or seventeen years of age — though perhaps that might not be of consequence — where he might continue his classical

[1] The bust by Chantry. — Ed.

studies as preparatory to one of our Universities, and at the same time learn German and French or both, with a little desk-diligence, but mainly by conversation. It is possible that through my friends of the Lowther family I may be able in course of time to get him into a government office. They have been spoken to on the subject; but should that hope fail, he must face one of our Universities as his only resource. I will not tire you with further particulars, as I fancy you know a little of his history, — his strong bent to the army, etc. He is turned eighteen.

Pray come and see us. I remember a man who got a prize in the lottery for which he was heartily sorry: he was so pestered by distressed persons and their patrons with begging petitions. You are now rich in leisure, and will be exposed to as many demands upon your time as this unfortunate was upon his money. We of this household are likely to be among the number of these applicants, and our first demand — a pretty lusty one it is — is that you would put yourself upon the top of a coach, advanced as the season is, and brighten our fireside. We are not dull, however, I assure you; and pretty busy in our little way, of which our proof is that last week I threw off three hundred and sixty verses at a heat. I should like to tell you something about our Rhine trip, though you do not ask, so I will put it off, the more so because you will hear of it from Mr. Aders; to whom, by-the-bye, we are in debt for a thousand kindnesses and for one small sum of money. He paid for our passport, and on settling accounts I forgot to reimburse him. This I have mentioned to Coleridge, but it may slip his memory. Therefore if you do not learn that C. has discharged the debt, pray do it for me with my kindest regards, and tell

us in your next how Mrs. Aders is. Mr. Quillinan has the power to remit the amount of our debt to you. Therefore get of him the deficit at your leisure. We had yesterday a delightful letter from my sister, who is with her nephew at Whitwick, between Loughborough and Ashby-de-la-Zouch. She speaks with high delight of her journey from Buxton down Darleydale (i.e. through Matlock) to Derby and Nottingham. . . .

Most faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Whitwick, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch,
November 30th, 1828.

My dear Friend,

I will not say that I like a letter the worse for being franked, but I should have been very angry with you (could I have known of my loss) had you kept yours back, as you threatened to do, in case of not meeting with a franker; so, once for all, let me assure you that the sight of your handwriting is always welcome to me at whatever cost, and, at the same time, I beg that whenever you have the inclination to take the pen — whether you have anything new to tell me or not — you will favour me with a letter of chit-chat, or whatever may come into your head. You are now a man of leisure, therefore I make no scruple in asking this of you. You can hardly form a notion of the pleasure it will be to me during the coming lonely winter to receive tidings of distant friends, — lonely I mean in comparison with past years, for my

nephew John is my constant companion, and we are very comfortable and happy together. To be sure I have only had a fortnight's trial, but I think I have already seen enough of Whitwick fireside to be justified in my belief that time will not hang heavy on our hands; yet never was there a place, though it is a crowded village, more barren of society, except at the distance of three miles, where our rector and his family and Lady Beaumont are always glad to see us, and a visit to them makes a pleasant termination of a walk not longer than we take daily.

You will, I am sure, be glad to hear that John enters with great zeal into the duties of his profession, and gives much satisfaction both to the parish and his rector. He has a fine voice, reads agreeably (according to my notion at least), and is much liked in the pulpit by his hearers; they have been accustomed to a spiritless humdrum curate. I, however, do not find John so much at home in preaching as in reading; but time will give him more confidence, and he is so desirous of doing his duty that I cannot doubt, if God grant him health and strength, of his becoming an effective preacher.

I know not into what quarter your English travels may lead you this winter, or in the spring, but we are only a few miles out of the great North Road — thirteen miles from Leicester, eight from Loughborough, five from Ashby-de-la-Zouch. By-the-bye, in future direct to me at Whitwick, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch; it is our regular post town, and we only get letters from Leicester by chance. This evening post has brought pleasant tidings from Rydal; all well, and my brother busy with poetical labours, and (what nearly concerns John and me) Mr. Quillinan has thoughts of paying a visit to Derbyshire with his eldest daughter, and if so will come to see us. This is what

he tells my sister, and I heartily wish he may put the scheme into execution. Pray, if you see him, tell him so. Indeed I must not trust to chance; if you do not see him, be so good as to write him a line by the twopenny post to the above effect, and desire him, if he comes, to write a line to say if possible when we may expect him, and to direct near Ashby, etc.

With respect to the £10, I find my brother has provided for payment of his debt to you, therefore be so good as to keep that sum a little while longer. John is ordering books to about that amount, and when he has received them I shall trouble you to pay it to the bookseller. Am I unreasonable in wishing to have your sketch of the Pyrenean tour filled up with your actual adventures? I fear I am, for I have no claim for such a favour, having not once written to thank you for the last addition to my little collection of your tours. I will not trouble you with explanations — excuse I have none — but, believe me, I was not less interested by the last than heretofore, and that I do greatly prize, and always shall prize, these proofs of your kindness.

Alas for Rome! I never expect to set foot upon that sacred ground, nor do I ever visit it even in a day-dream. But once again I do hope to see Switzerland if we all live a few years longer, and perhaps the country of the Tyrolese. Indeed, when my brother talks of Rome it always rather damps my hopes of even crossing the channel again, so many circumstances must concur to make so large a scheme practicable, and years slip away. On the 25th of next month (Xmas Day) I, the youngest of the three elders of the house, shall have completed my fifty-sixth year. I intend to stay at Whitwick six months without stirring from the spot, i.e. till May. My plans,

after that time, are not fixed; but certainly before I turn northward I shall visit my brother C. at Cambridge, and perhaps a friend at Worcester; and, if so, shall work on to Brinsop, where Miss Hutchinson now is, so that it is probable I shall not return to Rydal till July; but, as I said, nothing is fixed but six months at Whitwick, and feeling that I am so much of a comfort to John here, and being also myself very comfortable, I shall not find it easy to resist coming to him again next winter. This brings me to the wish that he had a good living, and a good wife, both which blessings I hope he will deserve. I wish you had seen Charles and Mary Lamb when you wrote. Pray give my kindest remembrances to them. I ask them not for a letter, but trust that you will write ere long and tell me all about them; also the Clarksons, it is very long since I had any tidings of them. . . .

Believe me, my dear friend,

Your much obliged and affectionate

D. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXIII

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Dockray

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 2d, 1828.

Dear Sir,

The papers to which you kindly direct my attention are written in that spirit which the question eminently requires; but as I have not seen the article in the *Quarterly* which called them forth, I am less able to judge how far they meet the arguments advanced. I shall therefore not comment upon any particular passages in your letter, though some things which you have said upon the

Church of England, and the relation in which its members stand to it, do not seem to me to be borne out by the fact. My own conclusions upon the general question differ from yours, because, without considering whether in religious matters, or matters so intimately connected with religion as this, the Romanists are bindable by oath or not, I apprehend that they are not prepared to give securities at all, or to submit to such regulations as would leave an attached member of the Church of England at ease.

The subject has great difficulties on every side. The strongest argument in my mind against concession is the danger, not to say the absurdity, of allowing Catholics to legislate for the property of a Protestant Church. This property is most inadequately represented in Parliament, scarcely at all, the clergy being excluded from the Lower House, and the bishops dependent, in the degree they are, upon the minister. Now we all know that the Romanists consider this property as having formerly belonged to them; and many, to my certain knowledge (however extravagant the expectation may seem as to the Church of England), look to the recovery of it. The legal maxim *nullum tempus occurrit Regi* has on the minds of the zealots of this body its parallel in respect to their church. Catholics have sat in Parliament we know well without directing a battery against the property of the Protestant church; they have, I believe, even been its defenders; but that was at a time when Episcopacy and the rights and property of the Church were assailed by fanatics, endeavouring to subvert everything. No inference can be drawn from the conduct of Papists when that hostility was going forward, in favour of their abstinence from attack in the present day. I point your attention to this part of the subject, from the interest I take

in it, not merely as a conscientious member of our Church but from a firm belief that in a secular view only it is eminently beneficial that so much property should be held by that kind of tenure, circulating from individual to individual and from family to family, without being locked up and confined to particular persons and families. This part of the argument deserves to be enlarged upon, and is capable of being most forcibly put; but I have not time to do it.

I own I do not see much force in what is said of the oppressiveness and injustice of exclusion from Parliament, when we consider what large bodies of men are excluded — the whole of the clergy from the Lower House, and every man who has not £300 real estate per annum; besides other large classes. Then again as to the stigma, unless you are prepared to open the Throne itself to Catholics, and overturn the provision of the Revolution of 1688, that still must cleave to their name and faith. But I must conclude. Believe me, dear sir, in haste,

Very respectfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXIV

William Wordsworth to Hugh James Rose

Rydal Mount, Dec. 11, 1828.

My dear Sir,

I have read your excellent sermons delivered before the University[1] several times. In nothing were my notions different from yours as there expressed. It happened

[1] *On the Commission and Consequent Duties of the Clergy*, preached before the University of Cambridge, in April, 1826, and published in 1828. — Ed.

that I had been reading just before Bishop Bull's sermon,[1] of which you speak so highly; it had struck me just in the same way as an inestimable production. I was highly gratified by your discourses, and cannot but think that they must have been beneficial to the hearers, there abounds in them so pure a fervour. I have as yet bestowed less attention upon your German controversy[2] than so important a subject deserves.

Since our conversation upon the subject of education, I have found no reason to alter the opinions I then expressed. Of those who seem to me to be in error, two parties are especially prominent; they — the most conspicuous head of whom is Mr. Brougham — who think that sharpening of intellect and attainment of knowledge are things good in themselves, without reference to the circumstances under which the intellect *is* sharpened, or to the quality of the knowledge acquired. "Knowledge," says Lord Bacon, "is power," but surely not less for evil than for good. Lord Bacon spoke like a philosopher; but they who have that maxim in their mouths the oftenest have the least understanding of it.

The other class consists of persons who are aware of the importance of religion and morality above everything; but, from not understanding the constitution of our nature and the composition of society, they are misled and hurried on by zeal in a course which cannot but lead to disappointment. One instance of this fell under my own eyes the other day in the little town of Ambleside, where a party, the leaders of which are young ladies, are

[1] *The Priest's Office Difficult and Dangerous.* — Ed.

[2] *The State of the Protestant Religion in Germany*, a series of discourses preached before the University of Cambridge, by the Rev. Hugh James Rose, London, 1825. — Ed.

determined to set up a school for girls on the Madras system, confidently expecting that these girls will in consequence be less likely to go astray when they grow up to be women. Alas, alas! they may be taught, I own, more quickly to read and write under the Madras system, and to answer more readily, and perhaps with more intelligence, questions put to them than they could have done under dame-teaching. But poetry may, with deference to the philosopher and the religionist, be consulted in these matters; and I will back Shenstone's school-mistress, by her winter fire and in her summer garden-seat, against all Dr. Bell's sour-looking teachers in petticoats that I have ever seen.

What is the use of pushing on the education of girls so fast, and mainly by the stimulus of Emulation, who, to say nothing worse of her, is cousin-german to Envy? What are you to do with these girls? What demand is there for the ability that they may have prematurely acquired? Will they not be indisposed to bend to any kind of hard labour or drudgery? And yet many of them must submit to it, or do wrong. The mechanism of the Bell system is not required in small places; praying after the *fugleman* is not like praying at a mother's knee. The Bellites overlook the difference; they talk about moral discipline; but wherein does it encourage the imaginative feelings, without which the practical understanding is of little avail, and too apt to become the cunning slave of the bad passions? I dislike *display* in everything; above all in education. . . . The old dame did not affect to make theologians or logicians; but she taught to read; and she practised the memory, often, no doubt, by rote; but still the faculty was improved; something, perhaps, she explained, and trusted the rest to parents, to masters,

and to the pastor of the parish. I am sure as good daughters, as good servants, as good mothers and wives, were brought up at that time as now, when the world is so much less humble-minded. A hand full of employment, and a head not above it, with such principles and habits as may be acquired without the Madras machinery, are the best security for the chastity of wives of the lower rank. Farewell. I have exhausted my paper.

Your affectionate

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXV

William Wordsworth to Hugh James Rose

My dear Sir,

I have taken a folio sheet to make certain minutes upon the subject of Education. . . .

As a Christian preacher your business is with man as an immortal being. Let us imagine you to be addressing those, and those only, who would gladly co-operate with you in any course of education which is most likely to insure to men a happy immortality. Are you satisfied with that course which the most active of this class are bent upon? Clearly not, as I remember from your conversation, which is confirmed by your last letter. Great principles, you hold, are sacrificed to shifts and expedients. I agree with you. What more sacred law of nature, for instance, than that the mother should educate her child? Yet we felicitate ourselves upon the establishment of infant schools, which is in direct opposition to it. Nay, we interfere with the maternal instinct before the child is born, by furnishing, in cases where there is no

necessity, the mother with baby linen for her unborn child. Now, that in too many instances a lamentable necessity may exist for this, I allow; but why should such charity be obtruded? Why should so many excellent ladies form themselves into committees, and rush into an almost indiscriminate benevolence, which precludes the poor mother from the strongest motive human nature can be actuated by for industry, for forethought, and for self-denial? When the stream has thus been poisoned at its fountain-head, we proceed, by separating, through infant schools, the mother from the child and from the rest of the family, disburthening them of all care of the little one for perhaps eight hours of the day. To those who think this an evil, but a necessary one, much might be said, in order to qualify unreasonable expectations. But there are thousands of stirring people now in England, who are so far misled as to deem these schools *good in themselves*, and to wish that, even in the smallest villages, the children of the poor should have what *they* call "a good education" in this way. Now, these people (and no error is at present more common) confound *education* with *tuition*.

Education, I need not remark to you, is everything that *draws out* the human being, of which *tuition*, the teaching of schools especially, however important, is comparatively an insignificant part. Yet the present bent of the public mind is to sacrifice the greater power to the less; all that life and nature teach, to the little that can be learned from books and a master. In the eyes of an enlightened statesman this is absurd; in the eyes of a pure lowly-minded Christian it is monstrous.

The Spartan and other ancient communities might disregard domestic ties, because they had the substitute of

Country, which we cannot have. With us, Country is a mere name compared with what it was to the Greeks: first, as contrasted with barbarians; and next, and above all, as patriotic *passion* alone was strong enough then to preserve the individual, his family, and the whole State from ever-impending destruction. Our course is to supplement domestic attachments without the possibility of substituting others more capricious.

Let it then be universally admitted that infant schools are an evil, only tolerated to qualify a greater, viz. the inability of mothers to attend to their children, and the like inability of the elder to take care of the younger, from their labour being wanted in factories, or elsewhere, for their common support. But surely this is a sad state of society; and if these expedients of tuition or education (if that word is not to be parted with) divert our attention from the fact that the remedy for so mighty an evil must be sought elsewhere, they are most pernicious things, and the sooner they are done away with the better.

But even as a course of tuition I have strong objections to infant schools, and in no small degree to the Madras system also. We must not be deceived by premature adroitness. The *intellect* must not be trained with a view to what the infant or child may perform, without constant reference to what that performance promises for the man. It is with the mind as with the body. I recollect seeing a German babe stuffed with beer and beef, who had the appearance of an infant Hercules. *He* might have enough in him of the old Teutonic blood to grow up to be a strong man; but tens of thousands would dwindle and perish after such unreasonable cramming. Now I cannot but think that the like would happen with our modern pupils, if the views of the

patrons of these schools were realised. The diet they offer is not the natural diet for infant and juvenile minds. The faculties are over-strained, and not exercised with that simultaneous operation which ought to be aimed at as far as is practicable. Natural history is taught in infant schools by pictures stuck up against walls, and such mummery. A moment's notice of a red-breast pecking by a winter's hearth is worth it all.

These hints are for the negative side of the question; and for the positive, what conceit, and presumption, and vanity, and envy, and mortification, and hypocrisy, etc., etc. are the unavoidable result of schemes where there is so much display and contention! All this is at enmity with Christianity; and if the practice of sincere churchmen in this matter be so, what have we not to fear when we cast our eyes upon other quarters where religious instruction is deliberately excluded? The wisest of us expect far too much from school teaching. One of the most innocent, contented, happy, and (in his sphere) most useful, men whom I know can neither read nor write. Though learning and sharpness of wit must exist somewhere, to protect, and in some points to interpret, the Scriptures, yet we are told that the Founder of this religion rejoiced in spirit, that things were hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes; and again, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." Apparently, the infants here contemplated were under a very different course of discipline from that which many in our day are condemned to. In a town of Lancashire, about nine in the morning, the streets resound with the crying of infants, wheeled off in carts and other vehicles (some ladies, I believe, lending their carriages for this purpose) to their school-prisons.

But to go back a little. Human learning, as far as it tends to breed pride and self-estimation (and that it requires constant vigilance to counteract this tendency we must all feel), is against the spirit of the gospel. Much cause, then, is there to lament that inconsiderate zeal, wherever it is found, which whets the intellect by blunting the affections. Can it, in a *general* view, be good that an infant should learn much which its *parents do not know?* Will not the child arrogate a superiority unfavourable to love and obedience?

But suppose this to be an evil only for the present generation, and that a succeeding race of infants will have no such advantage over their parents, still it may be asked, Should we not be making these infants too much the creatures of society when we cannot make them more so? Here would they be, for eight hours in the day, like plants in a conservatory. What is to become of them for the other sixteen hours, when they are returned to all the influences, the dread of which first suggested this contrivance? Will they be better able to resist the mischief they may be exposed to from the bad example of their parents, or brothers and sisters? It is to be feared not, because, though they must have heard many good precepts, their condition in school is artificial; they have been removed from the discipline and exercise of humanity, and they have, besides, been subject to many evil temptations within school and peculiar to it.

In the present generation I cannot see anything of an harmonious co-operation between these schools and home influences. If the family be thoroughly bad, and the child cannot be removed altogether, how feeble the barrier, how futile the expedient! If the family be of middle character, the children will lose more by separation from

domestic cares and reciprocal duties than they can possibly gain from captivity, with such formal instruction as may be administered.

We are then brought round to the point, that it is to a physical and not a moral necessity that we must look, if we would justify this disregard, I had almost said violation, of a primary law of human nature. The link of eleemosynary tuition connects the infant school with the national schools upon the Madras system. Now I cannot but think that there is too much indiscriminate gratuitous instruction in this country; arising out of the misconception above adverted to, of the real power of school teaching, relative to the discipline of life; and out of an over-value of talent, however exerted, and of knowledge, prized for its own sake, and acquired in the shape of knowledge. The latter clauses of the last sentence glance rather at the London University and the Mechanics' Institutes than at the Madras schools, yet they have some bearing upon these also. Emulation, as I observed in my last letter, is the master-spring of that system. It mingles too much with all teaching, and with all learning; but in the Madras mode it is the great wheel which puts every part of the machine into motion.

But I have been led a little too far from gratuitous instruction. If possible, instruction ought never to be altogether so. A child will soon learn to feel a stronger love and attachment to its parents, when it perceives that they are making sacrifices for its instruction. All that precept can teach is nothing compared with convictions of this kind. In short, unless book-attainments are carried on by the side of moral influences they are of no avail. Gratitude is one of the most benign of moral influences; can a child be grateful to a corporate body for

its instruction? or grateful even to the Lady Bountiful of the neighbourhood, with all the splendour which he sees about her, as he would be grateful to his poor father and mother, who spare from their scanty provision a mite for the culture of his mind at school? If we look back upon the progress of things in this country since the Reformation, we shall find that instruction has never been severed from moral influences and purposes, and the natural action of circumstances, in the way that is now attempted. Our forefathers established, in abundance, free grammar schools, but for a distinctly understood religious purpose. They were designed to provide against a relapse of the nation into Popery, by diffusing a knowledge of the languages in which the Scriptures are written, so that a sufficient number might be aware how small a portion of the popish belief had a foundation in Holy Writ.

It is undoubtedly to be desired that every one should be able to read, and perhaps (for that is far from being equally apparent) to write. But you will agree with me, I think, that these attainments are likely to turn to better account where they are not gratuitously lavished, and where either the parents and connections are possessed of certain property which enables them to procure the instruction for their children, or where, by their frugality and other serious and self-denying habits, they contribute, as far as they can, to benefit their offspring in this way. Surely, whether we look at the usefulness and happiness of the individual, or the prosperity and security of the state, this — which was the course of our ancestors — is the better course now. Contrast it with that recommended by men in whose view knowledge and intellectual adroitness are to do everything of themselves.

We have no guarantee in the social condition of these *well*-informed pupils for the use they may make of their power and their knowledge; the scheme points not to man as a religious being; its end is an unworthy one; and its means do not pay respect to the order of things. Try the Mechanics' Institutes, and the London University, etc., by this test. The powers are not co-ordinate with those to which this nation owes its virtue and its prosperity. Here is, in one case, a sudden formal abstraction of a vital principle, and in both an unnatural and violent pushing on. Mechanics' Institutes make discontented spirits and insubordinate and presumptuous workmen. Such at least was the opinion of Watt, one of the most experienced and intelligent of men. And instruction, where religion is expressly excluded, is little less to be dreaded than that by which it is trodden under foot. And, for my own part, I cannot look without shuddering on the array of surgical midwifery lectures, to which the youth of London were invited at the commencement of this season by the advertisements of the London University. Hogarth understood human nature better than these professors; his picture I have not seen for many long years, but I think his last stage of cruelty is in the dissecting room.

But I must break off, or you will have double postage to pay for this letter. Pray excuse it; and pardon the style, which is, purposely, as meagre as I could make it, for the sake of brevity. I hope that you can gather the meaning, and that is enough. I find that I have a few moments to spare, and will, therefore, address a word to those who may be inclined to ask, What is the use of all these objections? The schoolmaster is, and will remain, abroad. The thirst of knowledge is spreading and will

spread, whether virtue and duty go along with it or no. Grant it; but surely these observations may be of use if they tend to check unreasonable expectations. One of the most difficult tasks is to keep benevolence in alliance with beneficence. Of the former there is no want, but we do not see our way to the latter. Tenderness of heart is indispensable for a good man, but a certain sternness of heart is as needful for a wise one. We are as impatient under the evils of society as under our own, and more so; for in the latter case, necessity enforces submission. It is hard to look upon the condition in which so many of our fellow creatures are born, but they are not to be raised from it by partial and temporary expedients; it is not enough to rush headlong into any new scheme that may be proposed, be it Benefit Societies, Savings' Banks, Infant Schools, Mechanics' Institutes, or any other. Circumstances have forced this nation to do, by its manufacturers, an undue portion of the dirty and unwholesome work of the globe. The revolutions among which we have lived have unsettled the value of all kinds of property, and of labour, the most precious of all, to that degree that misery and privation are frightfully prevalent. We must bear the sight of this, and endure its pressure, till we have by reflection discovered the cause, and not till then can we hope even to palliate the evil. It is a thousand to one but that the means resorted to will aggravate it. Farewell.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

Query. — Is the education in the parish schools of Scotland gratuitous, or if not, in what degree is it so?

CCCCLXVI

William Wordsworth to F. Mansel Reynolds [1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Dec. 19th, 1828.

My dear Sir,

The best way of thanking you for your obliging letter is by replying to it immediately, which I shall do *snappishly*, not in temper, but for the sake of conciseness in style. . . . In winter we live so much to ourselves that I have scarcely heard of it [*The Keepsake*] or any of its brethren. You do well to point out to me what would suit you best, but some of the pieces you mention are among the happinesses of a life. Such articles cannot be bespoken with the probability of the contract being fulfilled. You must take what comes, and be content. . . . My last edition is yet a few pounds in my debt, and I am certain that the sale will be much impeded by the Paris edition, at less than half the price of the London one. Everybody goes to Paris nowadays. . . . I am rather rich, having produced seven hundred and thirty verses during the last month after a long fallow. In the list are two stories [2] and three incidents,[3] so that your wish may be gratified by some one or more of these pieces. But I will tell you frankly, I can write nothing better than a great part of *The Friend*, whether it be for your purpose or no. I cannot yet dismiss *The Keepsake*, it has got me into a scrape with Alaric Watts. He sent me a message through Mrs. Coleridge (I hope not accurately delivered) that I had not only puffed everywhere *The Keepsake*, but

[1] Editor of *The Keepsake*. — Ed.

[2] Probably *The Triad* and *The Wishing-Gate*. — Ed.

[3] Probably *The Jewish Family*, *The Gleaner*, and *Incident at Brugès*. — Ed.

depreciated the other works of its kind, his own of course included. How he could think me capable of anything so presumptuous, so ungentlemanly, and so *ungenerous*, I cannot conceive! I was offended, and did not reply; though he offered through the same channel to give me as much as you had done. It is true that I have frequently mentioned *The Keepsake* among my friends and acquaintances, recommending it so far as to say that if high prices could procure good writings it could be found there; but I sometimes added that such result was by no means sure. But as to any disparaging comparison between it and other works, especially of those editors with whom I am acquainted, had I even known the contents of *The Keepsake*, I could not have done such a thing. And here let me remind you that I consider myself quite at liberty to contribute to any of these works that will pay me as you have done, and have engaged to do so. I care not a straw whether they will or no, but that liberty I reserve, also the right of reprinting the pieces in any new edition of my works that may be called for. Pray confirm this by letter.

We have had only one letter from Mr. Coleridge, since we left London. I doubt even that. I believe the short note was received while we were in town, so that we know nothing of his proceedings, his jollifications with you included.

Allan Cunningham has been very urgent with me to write for him. We are on terms of intimacy, but my answer was as above. He offered me fifty guineas without mentioning quantity, before he knew the particulars of my engagement with you; but I told him Alaric Watts had a prior claim. . . .

I remain, my dear sir,

Very faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXVII

William Wordsworth to Barron Field

RYDAL MOUNT, 20th December, [1828.]

My dear Sir,

. . . I am truly glad you liked *The Triad*.[1] I think a great part of it is as elegant and spirited as anything I have written; but I was afraid to trust my judgment, as the aery figures are all sketched from living originals that are dear to me.

I have had a Worcester paper sent me that gives what it calls the real history of *Miserrimus*, spoiling — as real histories generally do — the poem altogether. I doubt whether I ought to tell it you; yet I may, for I had heard before — though since I wrote the sonnet — another history of the same tombstone. The first was, that it was placed over an impious wretch, who in popish times had profaned the pix. The newspaper tale is, that it was placed over the grave of a nonjuring clergyman at his own request, one who refused to take the oath to King William, was ejected in consequence, and lived upon the charity of the Jacobites. He died at eighty-eight years of age, so that, at any rate, he could not have been ill fed; yet the story says that the word alluded to his own sufferings on this account, i.e. his ejection, only. He must have been made of poor stuff; and an act of duty of which the consequences were borne so ill has little to recommend him to posterity. I can scarcely think that such a feeling would have produced so emphatic and startling an epitaph, and in such a place — just at the last of the steps falling from the Cathedral to the cloister. The pix story is not probable; the stone is too recent.

[1] Just then published in *The Keepsake* for 1829. — Ed.

I should like to write a *short* India piece, if you would furnish me with a story. Southey mentioned one to me in Forbes's *Travels in India*.[1] Have you access to the book at Liverpool, and leisure to consult it? He has it not. It is of a Hindoo girl, who applied to a Brahmin to recover a faithless lover, an Englishman. The Brahmin furnished her with an unguent with which she was to anoint his chest while sleeping, and the deserter would be won back. If you can find the passage, and as I said before have leisure, pray be so kind as to transcribe it for me, and let me know whether you think anything can be made of it. Adieu; and believe me

Affectionately and faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXVIII

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

Rydal Mount,
20th December, [Postmark, 1828.]

My dear Friend,

Pray prepare one of my busts for Mr. Barron Field, who will be in town in spring, and will receive and pay you for it. He is going out to Ceylon as advocate-fiscal, and wishes to take it along with him. He is also a particular friend of Mr. Charles Lamb. I hope my nephew has received his at Oxford. . . .

Ever faithfully your friend,

Wm. Wordsworth.

[1] See *Oriental Memoirs; from a Series of Familiar Letters* by James Forbes (1813–1815), Vol. III, pp. 233–235. — Ed.

CCCCLXIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

[Coleorton,] 26 Dec., [1828.][1]

. . . The small living of Moresby, vacated by Mr. Huddlestone of Whitehaven, has been offered to John by Lord Lonsdale, and he thankfully accepts it. The manner in which Lord L. has done this favour is not less gratifying than the favour itself.

Our rector, Mr. Merewether, is truly sorry to lose John, yet disinterested enough to be glad of his advancement. . . . He will remain here six months longer, and I of course shall remain with him. In fact, if he had continued here another winter, I should have done so also; as, in the first place, I am more useful than I could be anywhere else, and, in the second, am very comfortable. The walk to the rectory and the hall at Coleorton is not too long for a winter's morning call. Therefore we have no want of society, and our fireside at home has never been dull, or the evenings tediously long. It gives me great satisfaction also to see that John does the duties of his profession with zeal and cheerfulness, and is much liked and respected by the parishioners. His congregations, notwithstanding the numerous dissenting meeting-houses, are much increased.

Perhaps you know that we are on the borders of Charnwood Forest. There is much fine rocky ground,

[1] In 1828 John Wordsworth took holy orders, and lived first at Coleorton as curate. Dorothy went to stay with him at Coleorton on the 21st of November, 1828. Later in the year he received from Lord Lonsdale the living of Moresby, two and a half miles from Whitehaven, whither he removed in 1829. — Ed.

but no trees; the road dry in general, so it may be called a good country for walkers. There is one hill from which we have a most extensive prospect, twenty-one miles distant from us. The air is dry though cold (for we are at a great height above the sea). . . . John was at Cambridge last week, to be ordained priest; my brother Christopher and my nephews are well, and in good spirits. . . . Five weeks have I been here, and not a single rainy day. . . .

CCCCLXX

William Wordsworth to Abraham Hayward[1]

[No date; possibly 1828.]

I am not sure that I understand one expression in the passage your obliging note refers to, viz., that society will hereafter tolerate no such thing as literature, considered merely as a creation of art. If this be meant to say that any writer will be disappointed who expects a place in the affections of posterity for works which have nothing but their manner to recommend them, it is too obviously true to require being insisted upon. But still such things are not without their value, as they may exemplify with liveliness (heightened by the contrast between the skill and perfection of the manner, and the worthlessness of the matter as matter merely) rules of art and workmanship, which must be applied to imaginative literature, however high the subject, if it is to be permanently efficient. . . .

[1] Abraham Hayward (1801–1884), editor of the *Law Magazine, or Quarterly Review of Jurisprudence* from 1829 to 1844, translator of *Faust* (1831) into English prose, and a voluminous literary essayist. — Ed.

CCCCLXXI

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Friday, 1828.[2]

My dear Brother,

. . . Our expedition answered perfectly. Our route was by steam from London to Ostend, by barge to Ghent, by diligence to Brussels, by diligence to Namur, stopping four hours at the field of Waterloo, up the Meuse (*en voiture*) to Dinant, and back to Namur; thence by barge down the Meuse to Liège, *en voiture* to Spa, and by the same conveyance to Aix-la-Chapelle and Cologne; thence to Godesberg, two leagues above Bonn on the Rhine. Here we halted a week, and thence up the Rhine, as far as it is confined between the rocks, viz. to Bingen, and down it by water to Godesberg again, having stopped a day or two wherever we were tempted. At Godesberg we remained nearly another week, and thence down the Rhine to Nijmegen; thence *en voiture* to Arnheim and Utrecht, and by barge to Amsterdam, and so on through Haarlem, Leyden, The Hague, Delft, to Rotterdam; thence in steamboat to Antwerp, in diligence to Ghent, and by barge again to Ostend, where we embarked for London. . . . On our return to the North we stopped a fortnight with John, with whom his mother had resided during our absence of nearly seven weeks; and found John happy in the quiet and solitude of Whitwick. . . . I have been baffled in all my attempts to find a situation

[1] His brother, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. — Ed.

[2] This imperfectly dated letter refers to the tour on the Rhine, in Belgium, and in Holland, which Wordsworth took with his daughter and S. T. Coleridge "in the summer" of 1828. See his letter to Joseph Cottle, Jan. 27, 1829. — Ed.

for William, so that after having taken him off from his Greek, and remitted his Latin reading in some degree, I am now obliged to turn my thoughts again to college. With this view he must quit home for a year's preparation. I have written to Mr. Jackson to learn if he can take him; if he cannot, I must place him somewhere else, and should be glad of a suggestion from you on the subject. . . .

CCCCLXXII

William Wordsworth to Allan Cunningham

RYDAL MOUNT, Monday, [1828?]

My dear Friend,

I have this moment received your urgent letter; it brings me to the point. My engagement with *The Keepsake* was for one hundred guineas for verses, not less than twelve pages nor more than fifteen, and that I was to contribute to no other work at a lower rate, but if any editor would give as much, I was at liberty to take it.

Now I think this engagement would be broken, and it must seem so to you, should I accept your offer; for £50 for seven pages, could you or any one else afford to give it, would, I think, be an evasion, as they pay for my name fully as much as for my verses; and this would sink in value, according to the frequent use made of it.

Mr. Watts has also a prior claim to you, and I could not accept one from you without giving him the refusal of the same terms; though Mr. Watts has done a good deal to cancel any claim upon him, by entertaining a notion that I was not content with recommending *The Keepsake*, but that I depreciated other works of the same character. How he could suppose me capable of such

indelicacy I cannot comprehend; I never wrote or said a word in depreciation of any particular annual in my life, and all that I have done for *The Keepsake* was to say among my acquaintances that I was a contributor, and that if high prices given to writers could secure good matter, it would be found in *The Keepsake*, but I added frequently that it was far from certain that would be the case.

You see then exactly how the matter stands. I would most gladly meet your wishes as a friend, — be assured of this, — but I must not break my word; and it is right that poets should get what they can, as these annuals cannot but greatly check the sale of their works, from the large sums the public pay for them, which allows little for other poetry.

Believe me, my dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

1829

CCCCLXXIII

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL, Jan. 12, 1829.

Dear Sir,

That you are convinced[1] gives me great pleasure, as I hope that every other editor of Collins will follow your example. You are at perfect liberty to declare that you have rejected Bell's copy in consequence of my opinion of it; and I feel much satisfaction in being the instrument of rescuing the memory of Collins from this disgrace. I have always felt some concern that Mr. Home, who lived several years after Bell's publication, did not testify more regard for his deceased friend's memory by protesting against this imposition. Mr. Mackenzie is still living, and I shall shortly have his opinion upon the question; and if it be at all interesting, I shall take the liberty of sending it to you.

Dyer is another of our minor poets — minor as to quantity — of whom one would wish to know more. Particulars about him might still be collected I should think in South Wales, his native country, and where in early life he practised as a painter. I have often heard

[1] Mr. Dyce wrote: "I am convinced by what Mr. Wordsworth remarked to me, that those portions of Collins's *Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlanders*, which first appeared in Bell's edition of that ode, were forgeries." — Ed.

Sir George Beaumont express a curiosity about his pictures, and a wish to see any specimen of his pencil that might survive. If you are a rambler, perhaps you may, at some time or other, be led into Carmarthenshire, and might bear in mind what I have just said of this excellent author.

I had once a hope to have learned some unknown particulars of Thomson, around Jedburgh, but I was disappointed. Had I succeeded, I meant to publish a short life of him, prefixed to a volume containing *The Seasons*, *The Castle of Indolence*, his minor pieces in rhyme, and a few extracts from his plays, and his *Liberty;* and I feel still inclined to do something of the kind. These three writers, Thomson, Collins, and Dyer, had more poetic imagination than any of their contemporaries, unless we reckon Chatterton as of that age. I do not name Pope, for he stands alone, as a man most highly gifted; but unluckily he took the plain, when the heights were within his reach.

Excuse this long letter, and believe me,

Sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXXIV

William Wordsworth to Barron Field

Rydal Mount, 19th January, 1829.

My dear Sir,

Thank you for the extract from the *Quarterly*. It is a noble story. I remembered having read it; but it is less fit for a separate poem than to make part of a philosophical work. I will thank you for any notices from India, though I own I am afraid of an Oriental story. I know not that you will agree with me; but I have always

thought that stories, where the scene is laid by our writers in distant climes, are mostly hurt, and often have their interest quite destroyed, by being overlaid with foreign imagery; as if the tale had been chosen for the sake of the imagery only.

I remain,

Very faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXV

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
19th January, [1829.]

My dear Sir,

. . . I was much pleased with a little drawing by Mr. Edmund Field — exceedingly so, and I wrote opposite it two stanzas which I hope he and Mrs. Field will pardon, as I have taken a liberty with his name. The drawing is admirably done, and of just such a scene as I delight in, and my favourite rivers, the Duddon, Lowther, Derwent, etc., abound in. . . .

CCCCLXXVI

William Wordsworth to Joseph Cottle[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, NEAR KENDAL,
27th January, 1829.

My dear Sir,

It is an age since you addressed a very kind letter to me, and though I did not receive it till long after its date, — being then upon the Continent, — I should have

[1] The son of his old publisher at Bristol.— Ed.

replied to it much earlier, could I have done so to my satisfaction. But you will recollect it probably. The letter contained a request that I should address to you some verses. I wished to meet this desire of yours; but, I know not how it is, I have ever striven in vain to write verses upon subjects either proposed, or imposed. I hoped to prove more fortunate on this occasion, but I have been disappointed. And therefore I beg you to excuse me, not imputing my failure to any want of inclination, or even to the absence of poetic feeling connected with times and places to which your letter refers. You will not be hurt at this inability, when I tell you that I was once a whole twelve-month occasionally employed in vain endeavour to write an inscription upon a suggested subject, though it was to please one of my most valued friends.

I am glad to hear of your intended publication. *The Malvern Hills*,[1] from which you gave me a valuable extract, I frequently look at. It was always a favourite of mine. Some passages — and especially one, closing

To him who slept at noon and wakes at eve —

I thought super-excellent.

I was truly glad to have, from Mrs. W. and my daughter, so agreeable an account of your family, and to have this account confirmed by your letter. I often think with lively remembrance of the days I passed at Bristol, not setting the least value on those passed under the roof of your good father and mother.

Last week I spent at Keswick with Mr. Southey; himself, his family, Mrs. Coleridge, and Sara, all well except for colds, scarcely to be avoided at this severe

[1] *The Malvern Hills*, by Joseph Cottle, Sr., published in 1798. — Ed.

season. S. was busy as usual, and in excellent spirits. His son, about ten years of age, is a very fine youth, and though not robust enjoys excellent health. Mrs. Lovel was but poorly, indeed her health seems quite ruined. You probably have heard that Coleridge was on the Continent, along with my daughter and myself, last summer. The trip did him service, and though he was sometimes a good deal indisposed, his health, upon the whole, was for him not bad. Hartley lives in our neighbourhood. We see him, but not very often. He writes a good deal, and is about (I understand) to publish a volume of poems. You know that he is not quite so steady as his friends would wish. I must now conclude with the kindest regards, in which my daughter joins with Mrs. Wordsworth (my sister is in Leicestershire) to yourself, and your sisters, and nieces. And believe me, my dear friend,

Very faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, 27th January, 1829.

My dear Friend,

What an odd view do you take of the stability of human life! "I accept your invitation" — these words set us all agog; we looked for you in ten days at most; then comes — "after my return from Germany, from Italy, and the Holy Land"; but that did not follow, as it well might have done. Within the course of the last fortnight I have heard of the death of two among the most valued of my schoolfellows, — Godfrey Sykes, solicitor of the Stamp

Office, and Mr. Calvert,[1] probably unknown to you by name, — so we are thinned off. But you live in the light of hope, and you are in the right, as long as you can; but why not run down for a fortnight or three weeks? We should be so glad to see you! and really the absence you talk of is a little formidable to a man so near sixty as I am. About ten days ago I had a pop visit of ten minutes from Courtenay the barrister, who had been at Cockermouth Sessions. I recurred to the Law-Life Insurance, which you will recollect we all talked about together. He continues to affirm that it is a most excellent investment.

Now I am expecting every week a legacy of one hundred and sixty to Mrs. Wordsworth. I do not wish to touch this money, but should like to make it up to two hundred, and invest it in this way for her benefit in case of my decease. Mr. C. says that no interest will be received for four or five years; and you will recollect that you offered to lend your name, as the insurance must be in the name of some barrister whose honour may be depended upon. Will you be kind enough to call upon him, 23 Montagu Street, Russell Square, and settle the affair with him if you deem it an eligible thing, of which I suppose there is little doubt? The money shall be forthcoming at Masterman's Bank as soon as required. Should you disapprove of the intended insurance, pray let me know, with your reasons.

I had a letter the other day from Mr. Richard Sharp, of the corner of Park Lane, Upper Grosvenor Street, and of Mansion House Place, about business; which I was obliged to reply to in so great a hurry that I overlooked a notice of my son's position upon the list of candidates for the Athenæum. I do not like to trouble him with

[1] William Calvert, brother of Raisley Calvert, his early benefactor. — Ed.

another letter till I have an opportunity of a frank, which may not be shortly; therefore should you be passing either of these places, but not else, will you be kind enough to step in, and leave upon a slip of paper, that my son being beneficed in Cumberland, there is no probability of an election to the Athenæum being of the least use to him, so that his name may be removed from the list of candidates. I shall have a letter to Mr. Sharp to this effect ready for the first opportunity.

I have seen the article in *Blackwood* alluded to in your last; it is undoubtedly from the pen of Mr. Wilson himself. He is a perverse mortal, not to say worse of him. Have you peeped into his *Trials of Margaret Lindsay?*[1] You will there see to what an extent he has played the plagiarist with the very tale of Margaret in *The Excursion* which he abuses; and you will also, with a glance, learn what passes with him for poetical Christianity. More mawkish stuff I never encountered. I certainly should think it beneath me to notice that article in any way; my friends and admirers, I hope, will take the same view of it. Mr. W.'s pen must be kept going at any rate, I am at a loss to know why, but so it is; he is well paid, twice as much, I am told, as any other contributor. In the same number of *Blackwood* is an article upon Rhetoric, undoubtedly from De Quincey. Whatever he writes is worth reading. . . . Last week I passed with Southey — well (except for a cold), busy as usual. He is about to publish a book, two volumes of dialogues between the ghost of Sir Thomas More[2] and Montesino himself. It is an interesting work, and I hope will attract some attention. But periodicals appear to have swallowed

[1] Published in 1823. — Ed.

[2] In 1829 he published *Sir Thomas More.* — Ed.

so much money that there is none left for more respectable literature. You advert to critics that don't deal fairly with me. I do not blame them; they write as they feel, and that their feelings are no better they cannot help. The other set of critics, like Gifford, had he been alive, had their classical prejudices; and for the younger I am not poetical enough, they require higher seasoning than I give.

Don't mind franks in writing to me, that is, never put off because you have not a cover; I wish I had one for this, but here they are rarely to be had. . . .

Your grateful and affectionate

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

RYDAL MOUNT, 16th March, 1829.

Sir,

. . . More work and less pay, prolonged service and diminished salary, are surely the reverse of a dictate of natural justice, and this the Treasury knew as well, and some of them perhaps as feelingly, as we do. . . .

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXIX

William Wordsworth to E. H. Barker

RYDAL MOUNT, April 23, 1829.

Sir,

In the 380th page of the second volume of the last edition of my *Poems* (1827), you will find a notice of the poetry printed by Macpherson under the name of Ossian,

in which it is pronounced to be in a great measure spurious, and in the fourth volume of the same edition, page 238, is a poem, in which the same opinion is given. I am not at present inclined, nor probably ever shall be, to enter into a detail of the reasons which have led me to this conclusion. Something is said upon the subject in the first of the passages, to which I have taken the liberty of referring you. Notwithstanding the censure, you will see proofs — both in page 238, and in page 15 of the third volume of the same edition — that I consider myself much indebted to Macpherson, as having made the English public acquainted with the traditions concerning Ossian and his age. Nor would I withhold from him the praise of having preserved many fragments of Gaelic poetry, which without his attention to the subject might perhaps have perished. Most of these, however, are more or less corrupted by the liberties he has taken in the mode of translating them. I need scarcely say that it will give me pleasure to receive the volume,[1] in which you have given your reasons for an opinion on this subject differing from my own.

I remain, sir, faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXX

William Wordsworth to an English Prelate unknown

1829.

. . . The condition of Ireland is indeed, and long has been, wretched. Lamentable is it to acknowledge that the mass of her people are so grossly uninformed, and

[1] *Parriana*, by E. H. Barker, Esq., of Thetford, Norfolk, Vol. II, p. 758. — Ed.

from that cause subject to such delusions and passions, that they would destroy each other were it not for restraints put upon them by a power out of themselves. This power it is that protracts their existence in a state for which otherwise the course of Nature would provide a remedy by reducing their numbers through mutual destruction, so that English civilisation may fairly be said to have been the shield of Irish barbarism. And now these swarms of degraded people, which could not have existed but through the neglect and misdirected power of the sister island, are, by a withdrawal of that power, to have their own way, and to be allowed to dictate to us. A population vicious in character and unnatural in immediate origin (for it has been called into birth by short-sighted landlords set upon adding to the number of voters at their command, and by priests, who for lucre's sake favour the increase of marriage) is held forth as constituting a claim to political power, strong in proportion to its numbers; though, in a sane view, that claim is in an inverse ratio to them. Brute force, indeed, wherever lodged, as we are too feelingly taught at present, must be measured and met; measured with care, in order to be met with fortitude.

The chief proximate causes of Irish misery and ignorance are Popery — of which I have said so much — and the tenure and management of landed property; and both these have a common origin, viz. the imperfect conquest of the country. The countries subjected by the ancient Romans, and those that in the Middle Ages were subdued by the northern tribes, afford striking instances of the several ways in which nations may be improved by foreign conquests. The Romans, by their superiority in arts and arms, and, in the earlier period of their history,

in virtues also, may seem to have established a moral right to force their institutions upon other nations, whether under a process of decline, or emerging from barbarism; and this they effected, we all know, not by overrunning countries as eastern conquerors have done, — and Buonaparte, in our own days, — but by completing a regular subjugation, with military roads and garrisons, which became centres of civilisation for the surrounding district. Nor am I afraid to add — though the fact might be caught at, as bearing against the general scope of my argument — that both conquerors and conquered owed much to the participation of civil rights which the Romans liberally communicated. The other mode of conquest, that pursued by the northern nations, brought about its beneficial effects by the settlement of a hardy and vigorous people among the distracted and effeminate nations against whom their incursions were made. The conquerors transplanted with them their independent and ferocious spirit, to reanimate exhausted communities; and in their turn received a salutary mitigation, till in process of time the conqueror and conquered, having a common interest, were lost in each other. To neither of these modes was unfortunate Ireland subject; and her insular territory — by physical obstacles, and still more by moral influences arising out of them — has aggravated the evil consequent upon independence, lost as hers was. The writers of the time of Queen Elizabeth have pointed out how unwise it was to transplant among a barbarous people, not half subjugated, the institutions that time had matured among those who too readily considered themselves masters of that people. It would be presumptuous in me to advert in detail to the long-lived hatred that has perverted the moral sense in Ireland,

obstructed religious knowledge, and denied to her a due share of English refinement and civility. It is enough to observe that the Reformation was ill supported in that country, and that her soil became, through frequent forfeitures, mainly possessed by men whose hearts were not in the land where their wealth lay. . . .

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXXXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

Rydal Mount, Kendal, April 26th, 1829.

My dear Friend,

Dora holds the pen for me. I have been unable either to read, or write. A third privation, full as grievous, is necessary cessation from the amusement of composition, and almost of thought.

You cannot consult a better travelling guide than Mr. Sharp. I would go nowhere where he has been without the benefit of his experience. Would that we could join you in Rome! but till my son William is provided for, the hope cannot be encouraged. My sister-in-law Miss Joanna Hutchinson, and her brother Henry, an ex-sailor, are about to embark at the Isle of Man for Norway, to remain till July. Were I not tied by the Stamp Office I should certainly accompany them. As far as I can look back I discern in my mind imaginative traces of Norway. The people are said to be simple, and worthy; and Nature is magnificent. I have heard Sir H. Davy affirm that there is nothing equal to some of the ocean inlets of that region; and lastly, the very small expense would suit my finances.

This last word brings me to money. Following the example of my kind friend Mr. Sharp, I have sold out of the French funds, and in consequence have £2537 lying in the Kendal Bank at 2½ per cent; this money I am most anxious to lodge upon some unexceptionable security, if possible at the rate of 4½ per cent. If not, I must descend in my expectations to 4. My wish is to renounce all speculation and to be secure from a fall in the principal, for the sake of those whom I may leave behind. Mr. Sharp has kindly stated to me the supposed advantages and disadvantages of reinvestment in funds French or English. The interest in either case is something under 4 per cent, but with regard to the French 3's, there is a possibility of a rise in the principal. This, however, I would waive, and am inclined to prefer the English 4's if I can do no better; but here I fear a decline in the principal, which — our fortune being so small — would be mortifying, after having gained from interest and principal upwards of £1000 on £1800 since 1820.

It would have been a great joy to us to have seen you, though upon a melancholy occasion. You talk of the *more* than chance of your being absent upwards of two years. I am sorry for it on my own account, the more so as I have entered on my sixtieth year. Strength must be failing and snappings off (as the danger my dear sister has just escaped lamentably proves) ought not to be long out of sight.

What a shock that was to our poor hearts! Were she to depart, the phase of my moon would be robbed of light to a degree that I have not courage to think of. During her illness we often thought of your high esteem for her goodness, and of your kindness towards her upon all

occasions. Our last account was of the 19th. That morning she had been out in the garden for ten minutes; and we know that, if she had not been going on well since, we should certainly have heard. We look for a letter in course to-morrow. Mrs. Wordsworth is still with her, and I have entreated her to stay ten days more. Dora is my house-keeper, and did she not hold the pen it would run wild in her praises. Sara Coleridge, one of the loveliest and best of creatures, is with me, so that I am an enviable person, notwithstanding our domestic impoverishment. Mrs. Coleridge is here also; and, if pity and compassion for others' anxieties were a sweet sensation, I might be envied on that account also, for I have enough of it.

I have nothing to say of books (newspapers having employed all the voices I could command), except that the first volume of Smith's[1] *Nollekens and his Times* has been read to me, and I am indignant at the treachery that pervades it. Smith was once very civil to me, offering to show me anything in the museum at any and all times when he was disengaged. I suppose he would have made a *prey* of me, as he has done of all his acquaintances, of which I had at that time no suspicion, having thought myself not a little obliged to him for his offer. There are, however, some anecdotes in the book. The one which made most impression on me was that of Reynolds, who is reported to have taken — from the print of a half-penny ballad in the street — an effect in one of his pictures, which pleased him more than anything he had produced.

If you were here I might be tempted to talk with you about the Duke's "settling" of the Catholic question.

[1] *Nollekens and his Times*, by John Thomas Smith (1829). — Ed.

Yet why? for you are going to Rome, the very centre of light, and can have no occasion for my farthing candle. My kindest regards to the Lambs. Tell them about my sister, and say that I have long wished to write to Charles, and will certainly do so, as soon as I recover the use of my eyes for a little reading; which will be necessary for his play, and for the books he sent me, before I can make acknowledgments to my wish. Dora joins me in affectionate regards. She is a staunch anti-Papist, in a woman's way, and perceives something of the retributive hand of justice in your rheumatism; but, nevertheless, like a true Christian, she prays for your speedy convalescence.

Ever most faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[April, 1829.]

My dear Friend,

I cannot help slipping a note into a frank for London to thank you for your very kind letter, which makes me not quite hopeless of having a sight of you before I quit the midland part of England. Yet perhaps I ought not to hope in this case, as it seems if I do see you it will be at the expense of a long, perhaps tedious, and certainly to you melancholy, journey into Scotland. At all events, however, I may lawfully be pleased that if you should have this journey to take, you will remember me and the curate of Whitwick, and turn aside to our lowly vicarage.

I must have expressed myself with strange obscurity (but I wrote in great haste), since you have understood me as asking for a sketch-letter concerning your journey to the Pyrenees. If I said anything about a full account of that journey, it was not as drawn up for my particular use and pleasure, but in connexion with your previous more detailed tours, which with that of the Pyrenees also, I hope — now that you are aloof from the cares of the Courts of Justice — you will arrange and amplify, and at some time publish. I do not recollect what I said, but the above is what I have often thought of; and, in fact, I had received your very interesting Pyrenean sketch and, in the ambiguous words of that hurried letter, meant to thank you for it. It is of no use to rake up in your mind the contents of my (I fear too careless) letters, still less to hunt for them in your bureau; so, my dear friend, accept my thanks for this last and all former favours. The blunder gives me no uneasiness, being well satisfied that your friendship does not hang on trifles of punctilio like these; so no more on this subject.

Probably before this reaches you you may have heard of the last honour bestowed upon my bright and amiable nephew, Christopher Wordsworth, the appointment to the Craven Scholarship. You may be sure that his good father and all of us were made very happy last Monday morning, when the unanimous decision of the examiners was pronounced. He had already received honours, and prizes, sufficient to satisfy youthful ambition; but this is, besides the honour, an affair worthy of consideration, viz. £50 per annum for seven years. He does not intend to enter for the summer (the Brownonian) medals; and I believe not for any, not even the Chancellor's medal, for English verse. This I am glad of, as it will leave him

time, if he have resolution, to apply sufficiently to the mathematics, to obtain such a rank in the Mathematical Tripos as will enable him to strive for a place in the Classical, which his brother John has been excluded from, by being utterly unable to do anything in mathematics. I said I am glad of Christopher's determination for the above reason, but also on other accounts. It is surely very discouraging to the competitors when *one* is sure to carry away all that he strives for, which in Christopher's case has hitherto always happened.

I assure you he is not in the least elated by the congratulations he receives. Quite the contrary. He is very humble-minded, and one of the happiest and cheerfulest of human beings. I have good accounts from Rydal. John is now on his road thence to Whitwick, where I shall join him next Wednesday. William will accompany him on his way to London, whence he will depart in April with a Mr. Papendich, under whose care he is to remain for one year at Bremen, to learn the German and French languages, and I hope improve himself in other points. I have said William will be on his road to *London;* but in fact he will stay with us at Whitwick till summoned to London, at the time that Mr. Papendich is ready to sail for Germany. I had intended leaving Cambridge to-morrow, but have been tempted to stay where I am so happy and comfortable until Tuesday morning, when I shall take coach to Leicester, sleep there, and the next morning proceed by the Ashby-de-la-Zouch coach to Hugglescote (within two miles of Whitwick), whence I shall walk to W., leaving my luggage at H. I mention this as a guidance for you in case you should visit us in your way *from* London. Should you take us on your return, you must stop at Loughborough, seven

miles from Whitwick. But when the time comes, of course you will apprise us, and I will again give you precise directions. . . .

Yours affectionately,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXXIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[May 2, 1829.]

My dear Friend,

Your letter, which by some strange mistake was directed to me at Rydal instead of Whitwick, has just reached me, with a few words upon it by my niece, telling me that her father had written to you. From him you will have heard all particulars respecting where the dispersed of the family are, what doing, and what intending, and this I am glad of, not having time or room for a long letter. It drew tears from my eyes to read of your affectionate anxiety concerning me. In fact it is the first time in my life of fifty-six years in which I have had a serious illness; therefore I never before had an opportunity of knowing how much some distant friends cared about me. Friends abroad — friends at home — all have been anxious; and more so, far more I am sure, than I deserve; but I attribute much of this to my having been so remarkably strong and healthy. It came like a shock to every one, to be told of a dangerous illness having attacked me. I am now, through God's mercy, perfectly restored to health and almost to strength; but quiet care, for a time at least, I am assured is necessary; and indeed my own frame admonishes me that it is. But for the sake of my kind

friends I am bound to take care, and I promise them all, including you who will be far away from us, that I will be neither rash nor negligent. Indeed I never can forget what I suffered myself, nor the anxiety of those around me. My nephew William was the tenderest nurse possible. It would have moved anybody's heart to see him. But enough of this subject. He is still at Whitwick, and we hear nothing of Mr. Papendich's arrival in England; but I think we shall part from William finally in a week. His uncle wishes to see him at Cambridge. There he will stay a short while, and proceed to London, where he will take up his quarters with Mr. Quillinan (to whom, if you see him, give my kind love, and tell him I am deeply sensible of the interest I know he has taken concerning me).

I am not hopeless of William's having the good fortune to see you before your departure. Yours is dated the 27th, and you say in about ten days you shall go into Suffolk, pay the Clarksons a visit, and return to London. I wish this may catch you before your departure for Suffolk, indeed I expect it will; otherwise I should not have troubled you with the enclosure for Rydal. You must know we sent a letter there yesterday, and to-day Dora's little note arrives (written in yours), and there is something in it which it is better to answer immediately, yet we cannot find it in our hearts to tax her with a second shilling; so, recollecting that you can almost command franks through your loyal friends, I take the chance, and shall be much obliged to you and the worthy alderman if by your joint services it can be forwarded. . . . I wish you would now and then write to us when you are abroad. How long do you mean to stay? God grant that we may all be alive and in good health at your return! And what a joyful welcome we shall give you at Rydal Mount! If my

brother ever should be able to take us into Italy, we shall call on you to fulfil your promise of accompanying us, and what an accomplished guide you will be.

Your affectionate friend,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXXIV

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

[May 18, 1829.]

My dear Friend,

Mrs. W. holds the pen for me, having returned from Whitwick, where last Monday she left our dear sister improving gradually.

I am almost ashamed to trouble you about my concerns, now that you must be so busy in settling your own. I have heard from Mr. Courtenay to-day, and he gives so flattering an account of the Law-Lives that, notwithstanding the rise, I mean to avail myself of your kind offer. His words are, "I firmly believe that Law-Life shares will pay you, if bought at any price under £11 per share, will pay excellent interest — though nothing will be touched for the first four years — but the property will be increasing, etc."

I have therefore placed £300 at your disposal in Masterman's Bank, and I beg you will take the trouble of going through the forms necessary to effect for me this security, not omitting such considerations as will naturally suggest themselves to a lawyer about to reside a couple of years in foreign parts. I am most sincere in the expression of my regret at imposing so much trouble

upon you at this time, and am also truly thankful for your last interesting letter. Will it tend in any way to repay you, if Mrs. W. transcribes the opinion of Mr. Rathbone, the first American merchant in Liverpool, upon American securities?

"I can only say that my opinion is very favourable. Their habits of legislature are economical; they are not troubled with any refined feeling that should make them give any one of their public servants one farthing more than they think his services worth. In their public engagements they have been very punctual; their rapid improvement in public wealth has left them without temptation to be otherwise; and their States to the westward are growing with such accelerated increase in population that I consider the security, either of the stock of the States or of the Federation, as undoubted. The rate of interest must depend upon the rate of exchange at which the dividends are remitted, which varies from 8 to 12 per cent. My sister has some money in stocks of the United States by our advice. Some of the stocks are more saleable than others, which is an object of consideration to those who may want their money; but where income is the object, some of the heavy stocks pay the best interest. The Ohio stock is one of these latter. Of the Louisiana I can only speak generally, not particularly. It is, however, a rapidly increasing State."

Against the above opinion, which was asked for in consequence of your letter, I have nothing to say but that Mr. Rathbone, being a Quaker, may be somewhat biassed towards the Americans. Mr. Courtenay, in conclusion, says: "He should be sorry to risk the welfare of those dear to him by investment in French funds," and, as his final opinion, bids me look out for a good mortgage in England.

He says, "I should prefer that to any other security." This is what I — W. W. — wish for; but where am I to find it?

If I excursionize at all this summer, it will be by steam to Staffa, Iona, etc.; but I wish I had seen Rome, Florence, and the Bay of Naples. I have not opened a book for nine weeks — a fine holiday! Have you seen Southey's *Colloquies?* If so, how do you like them? Pray effect a meeting with my son William, who will be at Mr. Quillinan's in a few days; write him a note, and he will call upon you when and wherever you may appoint. Would we might tempt you to come down for a fortnight, and join Dora and myself in a tour to the Duddon, etc., which we meditate. Farewell. Mary and Dora join me in best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXXXV

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

Rydal Mount, Sunday, July 19, 1829.

My dear Sir George,

Last night Mr. Drummond arrived, and brought your very kind letter. The mournful event[1] which occasioned it, I was instantly informed of by the care — for which I was truly thankful — of Mr. Knight, and Mr. Merewether.

The shock was very painful, and would have been still more so had we received it first through the public papers.

[1] The death of his mother, the dowager Lady Beaumont, wife of Sir George, the artist. — Ed.

It is seven and twenty years since I first became acquainted with the lamented pair whom we have lost. We soon became united in affectionate intercourse, which has known no abatement, but our friendship rather strengthened with time, and will survive in my heart till it ceases to beat. In the recently deceased we have lost one of the most disinterested and pure-minded of human beings. Abundant proofs have I had, my dear Sir George, how strongly attached she was to you, and from the depths of my heart I condole with you and Lady Beaumont in this bereavement; but she was ripe for the change, blessed be God! and I trust is, or is destined to be, a glorified spirit.

We were sorry to learn from Mr. Drummond that your own health had suffered under this trial. I should be glad to hear that nothing of the kind recurred from what you have yet to go through at Coleorton. The funeral will be to-morrow; may you be supported through it! Mr. Drummond tells me that Mr. Merewether has in his possession a paper, dated so far back as 1816, signifying the wish of the departed upon this and some other points; which leads me to remember that when Lady Beaumont conducted Mrs. Wordsworth and myself to the monument of Sir George, she said, "You observe there is just room for my name below"; but whether she meant on the same tablet, neither of us could venture to ask; but you may have more recent instructions.

We are most anxious to hear how my poor sister bears these afflicting tidings. She is at Halifax, in Yorkshire, where she was left by my son recovering from the effects of her late dangerous illness. Thankful at all events will she be that her dear friend's time of suffering was so short, and that she passed several days with her and Mrs. Willes so lately.

Along with my condolence, in which Mrs. Wordsworth and my daughter join, to Lady Beaumont, present my sincere regards, and believe me, my dear Sir George,

Faithfully, your much obliged

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXXVI

William Wordsworth to Barron Field

RYDAL MOUNT.

My dear Sir,

It gives me great pleasure that your destiny is changed. Gibraltar is rather a confined situation; but I hope it may agree with your health, and Mrs. Field's. It cannot but be greatly preferable to India, and is so much nearer home that it seems a good deal more probable that we may meet again than if your station had been the East. Take our best wishes, and God bless you. I remain,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXXVII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, July 24, 1829.

. . . I wish to make a tour in Ireland, perhaps, along with my daughter; but I am ignorant of so many points, — as where to begin — whether it be safe at this *rioting*

period — what is best worth seeing — what mode of travelling will furnish the greatest advantages at the least expense. Dublin, of course, the Wicklow Mountains, Killarney Lakes, and, I think, the ruins not far from Limerick would be among my objects, returning by the North. . . .

It is time to thank you for the verses you so obligingly sent me. Your sister's have abundance of spirit and feeling; all that they want is what appears in itself of little moment, and yet is incalculably great, that is, workmanship, the art by which the thoughts are made to melt into each other, and to fall into light and shadow, regulated by distinct preconception of the best general effect they are capable of producing. This may seem very vague to you, but by conversation I think I could make it appear otherwise. It is enough for the present to say that I was much gratified, and beg you will thank your sister for favouring me with the sight of compositions so distinctly marked with that quality which is the subject of them, viz. *Genius*. Your own verses are to me very interesting, and affect me much as evidences of high- and pure-mindedness, from which humble-mindedness is inseparable. I like to see and think of you among the stars, and between death and immortality, where three of these poems place you. The *Dream of Chivalry* is also interesting in another way; but it would be insincere not to say that something of a style more terse, and a harmony more accurately balanced, must be acquired before the bodily form of your verses will be quite worthy of their living souls. You are probably aware of this, though perhaps not in an equal degree with myself; nor is it desirable you should be, for it might tempt you to labour which would divert you from subjects of infinitely greater importance.

Many thanks for your interesting account of Mr. Edgeworth. I heartily concur with you in the wish that neither Plato, nor any other author, may lead him from the truths of the Gospel, without which our existence is an insupportable mystery to the thinking mind.

Looking for a reply at your early convenience,

I remain, my dear sir,

Faithfully, your obliged

WM. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCLXXXVIII

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, July 29, 1829.

My dear Sir,

I hope you have enjoyed yourself in the country, as we have been doing among our shady woods, and green hills, and invigorating streams. The summer is passing on, and I have not left home, and perhaps shall not; for it is far more from duty than inclination that I quit my dear and beautiful home, and duty pulls two ways. On the one side my mind stands in need of being fed by new objects for meditation and reflection, the more so because diseased eyes have cut me off so much from reading; and, on the other hand, I am obliged to look at the expense of distant travelling, as I am not able to take so much out of my body by walking as heretofore.

I have not got my MS. back from the ——,[2] whose managers have, between them, used me shamefully; but

[1] Of His Majesty's Stationery Office. — Ed.

[2] An annual, to which he had been induced to become a contributor. — Ed.

my complaint is principally of the editor, for with the proprietor I have had little direct connection. If you think it worth while, you shall, at some future day, see such parts of the correspondence as I have preserved. Mr. Southey is pretty much in the same predicament with them, though he has kept silence for the present. . . . I am properly served for having had any connection with such things. My only excuse is, that they offered me a very liberal sum, and that I have laboured hard through a long life without more pecuniary emolument than a lawyer gets for two special retainers, or a public performer sometimes for two or three songs. Farewell. Pray let me hear from you at your early convenience.

And believe me faithfully,

Your much obliged

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCLXXXIX

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

Patterdale, August 4, 1829.

I am truly obliged by your prompt reply to my letter, and your kind invitation, which certainly strengthens in no small degree my wish to put my plan of visiting Ireland into execution. At present I am at Patterdale, on my way to Lord Lonsdale's, where I shall stay till towards the conclusion of the week, when I purpose to meet my wife and daughter on their way to my son's at Whitehaven; and if I can muster courage to cross the Channel, and the weather be tolerable, I am not without hope of embarking Friday after next. This is Monday, August 4th;

I believe every Friday the steamboat leaves Whitehaven for the Isle of Man. Whether it proceeds directly to Dublin or not, I do not know, but probably it does. I do not think it very probable that my daughter will accompany me, yet she may do so; and I sincerely thank you, in her name and my own, for the offer of your hospitalities, which, as we are utter strangers in Dublin, will be highly prized by us. Believe me, my dear Mr. Hamilton,

Most sincerely, your much obliged

W. WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXC

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

WHITEHAVEN, August 15, 1829.

. . . The steamboat has been driven ashore here, so that I could not have gone in her to Dublin. But my plans had been previously changed. My present intention is to start with Mr. Marshall, M.P. for Yorkshire, who gives me a seat in his carriage, for Holyhead, on the 24th inst.; so that by the 27th or 28th we reckon upon being in Dublin, when I shall make my way to the Observatory, leaving him and his son to amuse themselves in the city, where he purposes to stop three days; which time, if convenient, I should be happy to be your guest. We then proceed upon a tour of the island by Cork, Bantry, Killarney, Limerick, etc., up to the Giant's Causeway, and return by Portpatrick. . . .

CCCCXCI

William Wordsworth to Henry Robinson[1]

Sea View, Whitehaven,
Saturday, August 15th, [1829.]

My dear Sir,

I have no objection whatever to advance £2000 upon unobjectionable security, and therefore will thank you to let me know the particulars, with your judgment thereupon, as speedily as you can. I remain here till this day week, so that, if you can address me here, pray do. On Saturday I return to Rydal, and remain there till Sunday evening, when I depart upon a tour which might make it more difficult to communicate with me. About the 27th or 28th inst. I shall be in Dublin, where a letter addressed Post Office, under cover to John Marshall, Esq., M.P., will find me; but I hope it will be convenient for you to write me to this place.

I remain, dear sir, faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXCII

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

Wexford, Ireland,
Saturday, September 5th, [1829.]

My dear Brother,

If you have not heard from others of my movements you will be surprised at the date of this. . . . My quarters were at the Observatory four or five miles from Dublin, with Professor Hamilton, a young man of

[1] Henry Robinson, solicitor, York. — Ed.

extraordinary genius, the successor of Dr. Brinkley. In the course of two days I saw as much of Dublin as I wished, all the public buildings inside and out, Trinity College, — its hall, library, various MSS., etc., including the Fagel collection, 20,000 volumes, for which during the French Revolution the college gave between eight and ten thousand pounds, — the bank, formerly the Parliament House, etc. We left Dublin on Wednesday at noon, and have since seen all the crack places of the Wicklow Mountains and country, the Devil's glen excepted. The scenery is certainly charming, and either for residence or occasional touring from Dublin must be delightful. But I have yet seen nothing in Ireland comparable to what we have in Wales, Scotland, and among our Lakes. The celebrated vale of Avoca and the glen of the Dargle are both rich in beauty, the latter in character something between Wharfdale and Fascally in the Highlands, where the Garry and the Tummel meet below the pass of Killiecrankie; superior to Wharfdale, but yet in a greater degree inferior to the Scotch scenes. You have heard probably of the "Seven Churches." This ground, so famous for the miracles of St. Kevin, we visited, and were highly interested; a deep valley with two lochs or pools, the one of the serpent unholy, in which no one will bathe, and the other sacred. Near three of the churches, of which alone considerable remains are left, stands a very lofty round pillar, very much like a lighthouse, but (as are the churches) of extreme antiquity. While we were looking round upon this sad, solemn, and romantic scene, with a train of poor hangers-on and our guide, a woman about thirty years of age passed, bearing a sickly child in her arms. Mr. Olway, a Protestant clergyman, who along with Professor Hamilton had

kindly come from Dublin to meet us here, knowing what she must be about, put to her some questions; from which we learned that she was going to dip the child in a part of the stream called Kevin's pool, to cure its lameness. She had already come four long miles to do this; a trouble she had taken three times already, and said her prayers nine times, kneeling on four corners of the rocks in the bed of the river in succession. Afterwards I went to see this pool. Near it stands a sacred thorn, which I found covered with innumerable little rags of linen cloth, small slips, hung there to wear away in the weather, from a belief that, as the rags consume, the disease will abate also. It would have affected you very much to see this poor confiding creature, and to hear the manner in which she expressed her faith in the goodness of God and St. Kevin. What would one not give to see among Protestants such devout reliance on the mercy of their Creator, so much resignation, so much piety, so much simplicity and singleness of mind, purged of the accompanying superstitions! The tenderness with which she spoke of the child and its sufferings, and the sad pleasure with which she detailed the progress it had made towards recovery, would have moved the most insensible; but, after all, her resignation to the event, be it what it might, was uppermost. . . .

We are at Killarney, balked by a wet day. We have seen Waterford, the banks of the Suir, and the Black Water, from four or five miles below Lismore Castle to Fermoy, thence to Cork, of which the harbour is most beautifully gay and rich. With the scenery in Ireland, excepting what could be seen of Killarney from one point of view yesterday, and what we have caught a glimpse of this morning, I am upon the whole disappointed; not

with the county of Wicklow, but all the rest, except this truly enchanting neighbourhood, for such it seems. But how mortifying this vile weather! . . . This region appears deserving of all the praise that has been lavished upon it. . . . The condition of the lower orders is indeed abject, as you well know. But there are everywhere, more or less scattered, symptoms of improvement, and in some places great advances have been made. . . . I am inclined to think less unfavourably of the disposition of the upper ranks of Catholics to exalt their Church, however much they may wish ours to be depressed. They have been mortified by the power of the priests; but still they have sufficient motives of a temporal nature for hostility to our Church. . . .

Yours, most affectionately,

W. W.

CCCCXCIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Marshall

15th September, [1829.]

. . . On Wednesday Dora arrived from Keswick, where she had been officiating, with seven more young ladies, as bridesmaid to her friend Sara Coleridge. . . . She is as lively as a lark, and is going to Coniston with the bride and bridegroom, who have been staying with us since Thursday, a very interesting pair. They are to leave us to-morrow (Wednesday) and on Thursday Mrs. Coleridge (the mother) will come to us to stay till Monday morning; when she is to depart for Halston in Cornwall, on a visit to her son Derwent, who is settled there as curate and schoolmaster. Mrs. Coleridge will be

brought hither by a Miss Trevenan, a parishioner of Derwent's, a very wealthy lady, travelling in her own carriage, who will take Mrs. C. into Cornwall, after spending a day with us. I am glad to tell you of any good fortune attending S. T. Coleridge's sons. I will therefore add that this lady is even quite the patroness of Derwent, stood godmother for his child, and is very much attached to D. and to his wife. . . .

It is time to turn to our travellers.[1] Our last letter was from Cork. My brother seems to have been much more than satisfied with the tour, highly delighted, more perhaps with the society, the opportunities of observations, etc., than with the scenery; yet the Seven Churches, and other particular objects, had struck him very much. . . .

Yours affectionately,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXCIV

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

LIMERICK, 17th, [Postmark, Sept., 1829.]

My dear Brother,

Read this first. This letter, begun on the 5th, I could not think worthy of being sent off, and I never have found time to write a better, for I really have worked hard. The day before yesterday Mr. James Marshall and I breakfasted at five, set off from Kenmare at half past, rode ten Irish miles, took to our feet, ascended nearly fifteen hundred feet, descended as much, ascended

[1] Her brother and Mr. Marshall. — Ed.

another ridge as high, descended as much, and then went to the top of Carrantuohill, three thousand feet, the mountain being the highest in Ireland, three thousand four hundred and ten feet above the level of the sea. We then descended, walked nearly two hours, and rode on bad horses an hour and a half or more, and reached Killarney at ten at night, having eaten nothing but a poor breakfast of spongy bread without eggs, and one crust of the same quality, and drank milk during the whole day. I reached Killarney neither tired nor exhausted after all this. We were richly recompensed by a fine day, and most sublime views. We saw everything at and about Killarney, the bay and the glen of Glengariff (a celebrated scene not far from Bantry) included. With the county of Kerry I have been much pleased, and by some parts almost astonished.

As to the Irish people, our mode of travelling is not favourable to conversing much with them ; but I make the most of my opportunities. Poor laws cannot, I think, be introduced into Ireland. There is no class to look to their administration, and the numbers who would have a claim for relief are so vast that any allowance which would tell for their benefit could not be raised without oppression to those who are already possessed of some property. I have no more room, and the subjects before me are inexhaustible. Farewell. God bless you, my dear brother. We shall push on as fast as we can from this place.

Affectionately yours,

W. W.

CCCCXCV

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL, Oct. 16, 1829.

My dear Sir,

On my return from Ireland, where I have been travelling a few weeks, I found your present of George Peele's works,[1] and the obliging letter accompanying it; for both of which I offer my cordial thanks.

English literature is greatly indebted to your labours, and I have much pleasure in this occasion of testifying my respect for the sound judgment, and conscientious diligence, with which you discharge your duty as an editor. Peele's works were well deserving of the care you have bestowed upon them; and, as I did not previously possess a copy of any part of them, the beautiful book which you have sent me was very acceptable.

By accident, I learned lately that you had made a book of extracts, which I had long wished for opportunity and industry to execute myself. I am happy it has fallen into so much better hands. I allude to your *Specimens from British Poetesses*.[2] I had only a glance at your work; but I will take this opportunity of saying, that should a second edition be called for, I should be pleased with the honour of being consulted by you about it. There is one poetess to whose writings I am especially partial, the Countess of Winchelsea. I have perused her poems frequently, and should be happy to name such passages as I think most characteristic of her genius, and most fit to be selected.

[1] George Peele (1558–1598) Elizabethan poet, actor, etc. — Ed.
[2] Published in 1825. — Ed.

I know not what to say about my intended edition of a portion of Thomson. There appears to be some indelicacy in one poet treating another in that way. The example is not good, though I think there are few to whom the process might be more advantageously applied than to Thomson. Yet so sensible am I of the objection, that I should not have entertained the thought, but for the expectation held out to me by an acquaintance, that valuable materials for a new Life of Thomson might be procured. In this I was disappointed. . . .

With much respect, I remain, dear sir,

Sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXCVI

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

Whitehaven Castle, Oct. 19th.

My dear Sir George,

I have this moment received your obliging letter, forwarded to me from Rydal Mount, whither I hoped to have returned before this time. Unexpected delays have arisen, and I now fear that we shall scarcely be able to start in time for reaching Coleorton till the first week in November. But, not to shackle Lady Beaumont and you in the least, we will let you know the day of our departure when it is fixed; and pray do not scruple to let us know if this unavoidable delay has rendered it inconvenient for you to receive us.

In fact we have been obliged to take another house for the newly-married pair, the one which my son had hired,

and which we had half furnished, being pronounced by the medical attendant of the Curwen family much too cold for her health; which is too probable, as it is no less than five hundred feet above the level of the sea, to which it is completely exposed, and indeed to all winds.

I long to see your little boy, and believe me, dear Sir George, with kindest remembrances to Lady Beaumont,

Faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXCVII

Dora Wordsworth to Edward Quillinan

Rydal Mount, Nov. 14th, 1829.

You cruel, wicked vagabondiser, nearly a fortnight elapsed! and not even a line to inform us how you performed your journey, whether you escaped colds, broken limbs, and a thousand other perils! We have comforted ourselves with "no news is good news," and expect you will please to let us hear from you when you have nothing better to do, and that happy time, it is to be hoped, will arrive some time before the new year comes in. As a punishment for your idlesse I shall inflict upon you a history of our proceedings since you left us. Father and Mr. Southey started as intended in the tub for Levens in pouring rain; all the old cloaks and coats in the house were raked up, *hat covers*, etc. Father was exactly like a Scotch drover. Mr. Southey with his blue cloak and scarlet lining described to us in broken English the dangers and privations he had gone through in his retreat from Moscow, and laughed at our fears for the wetting

they would get. At length they were packed and drove off. When their driver brought back the pony, he told James, "the gentlemen had had a terrible rise! for when they got to Kendal, there was a carriage and four, two postillions, and two outriders waiting for them," and could you have seen the pride and delight expressed in James's countenance whilst telling me of this compliment paid to his master you would have been entertained.

Mr. Southey was much disappointed to find you gone when he came downstairs. He has sent the extract from Evelyn about the trees, but I am sorry I cannot enclose it this time. Barber took it away with him the other morning, and has not brought it back. Dear Edith has done the hour-glass beautifully. I wish you could see it. When you next come down she says you must write something for her in her album. She declares she has a much better right to some verses than Miss Carleton. "Oh, but they were written to oblige Miss Luff," we all tell her. "I care not whom they were written to oblige, they do not oblige me," she replies, and is very furious.

Aunt Wordsworth I am happy to say keeps quite well, in spite of the wretched weather. We have had but one fine day since you left us. Your lover goes to Whitehaven on Tuesday. She too is well. A letter from Willy, who desires his very best thanks may be given you for your kind letter to him, and we have had another from "Worthy Sir" and "my spouse," as long and as difficult to read as either of those you were so much interested in. The rector does not trouble us with many letters. We have neither heard from him nor of him. So I trust his tithes, and *moduses*, are gone to sleep. By the way, father has written to "Worthy Sir" a letter

which he hopes will close the correspondence, saying he has requested a friend to convey a sovereign to him. This you will be kind enough not to forget to do when convenient. His last address is Rev. Dr. Turner, Cambridge Terrace, Edgeware Road.

You know father says it is very difficult to be quite honest. We ladies have found it so in regard to a pair of beauteous scissors which I enclose. We are not *certain* they are yours, and, on the plea of not knowing to whom they belong, would have kept them could we have agreed who was to appropriate them; but as we all would have them it was decided they had better be sent to you, as this is the only way of settling the question. Lucky for you that ladies are such selfish creatures. Edith was one of the worst.

Hartley was here the other evening. We told him Barber[1] was turned poet, and he should hear some of his verses, so we read him your poem. "Well," says he, "they are very pretty indeed, but if Barber wrote these lines I will be shaved dry with a rusty sickle by any barber in Westmoreland." Poor Barber is proud indeed of his poem. He has it off by heart, and really repeats it well. Hartley has given me a copy of the *Winter's Wreath*, and with it such a pretty sonnet, but shockingly complimentary. My head will be turned by daft verses from daft men I am sure.

I am ashamed of this untidy scrawl, but am writing in a great hurry, as the Gordon packet is waiting for me, and I have never once inquired after your little darlings, whom I trust you found well and happy as you could desire.

[1] Doubtless the Mr. Barber referred to in the Fenwick note to Wordsworth's *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont*. Mr. Quillinan wrote *The Birch of Silver-How* for Mr. Barber of Grasmere. — Ed.

All send their kind love, Edith's too. The money came safe from Kendal. Blue bonnet's eyes did sparkle when I gave her your little present.

Ever your very affectionate and faithful

DORA WORDSWORTH.

CCCCXCVIII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, December 23, 1829.

. . . The poem you were so kind as to enclose gave me much pleasure, nor was it the less interesting for being composed upon a subject you had touched before. The style in this latter is more correct, and the versification more musical. Where there is so much of sincerity of feeling, in a matter so dignified as the renunciation of Poetry for Science, one feels that an apology is necessary for verbal criticism. I will therefore content myself with observing that *joying* for *joy*, or *joyance*, is not to my taste; indeed, I object to such liberties upon principle. We should soon have no language at all if the unscrupulous coinage of the present day were allowed to pass, and become a precedent for the future. One of the first duties of a writer is to ask himself whether his thought, feeling, or image cannot be expressed by existing words or phrases, before he goes about creating new terms, even when they are justified by the analogies of the language. "The cataract's steep flow" is both harsh and inaccurate. "Thou hast seen me bend over the cataract" would express one idea in simplicity, and all that was required; had it been necessary to be more particular,

steep flow are not the words that ought to have been used. I remember Campbell says, in a composition that is overrun with faulty language,

> And dark as winter was the *flow*
> Of Iser rolling rapidly —

that is, flowing rapidly. The expression ought to have been *stream* or *current*.

Pray, thank your excellent sister for the verses which she so kindly intrusted to me. I have read them all three times over with great care, and some of them oftener. They abound with genuine sensibility, and do her much honour; but, as I told you before, your sister must practise her mind in severer logic; for example, the first words of the first poem, "Thou *most companionless*." In strict logic, "being companionless" is a positive condition not admitting of more or less, though in poetic feeling it is true that the sense of it is deeper as to one object than to another; and the *day* moon is an object eminently calculated for impressing certain minds with that feeling. Therefore the expression is not faulty in itself absolutely, but faulty in its position, coming without preparation; and therefore causing a shock between the common-sense of the words, and the impassioned imagination of the speaker. This may appear to you frigid criticism, but, depend upon it, no writings will live in which these rules are disregarded. In the next line,

> Walking the blue but foreign fields of day,

the meaning here is walking blue fields which, though common to see in our observation by night, are not so by day, even to accurate observers. Here, too, the thought

is just; but again there is an abruptness; the distinction is too nice, or refined, for the second line of a poem.

"Weariness of that *gold* sphere." *Silver* is frequently used as an adjective by our poets; *gold*, as I should suppose, very rarely, unless it may be in dramatic poetry, where the same delicacies are not indispensable. "Gold watch," "gold bracelet," etc., are shop language. "Gold sphere" is harsh in sound, particularly at the close of a line. "Faint, as if weary of my golden sphere," would please me better. "*Greets thy rays.*" You do not greet the *ray* by *daylight;* you greet the *moon;* there is no *ray.* "Daring *flight*" is wrong; the moon, under no mythology that I am acquainted with, is represented with wings; and though on a stormy night, when clouds are driving rapidly along, the word might be applied to her apparent motion, it is not so here. Therefore "flight" is here used for unusual or unexpected ascent, a sense, in my judgment, that cannot be admitted. The slow motion by which this ascent is gained is at variance with the word. The rest of this stanza is *very* pleasing, with the exception of one word — "thy nature's *breast*." Say "profane thy nature"; how much simpler and better! "Breast" is a sacrifice to rhyme, and is harsh in expression. We have had the *brow* and the *eye* of the moon before, both allowable; but what have we reserved for human beings, if their features and organs etc., are to be *lavished* on objects without feeling and intelligence? You will, perhaps, think this observation comes with an ill grace from one who is aware that he has tempted many of his admirers into *abuses* of this kind; yet, I assure you, I have never given way to my own feelings in personifying natural objects, or investing them with sensation, without bringing all that I have said to a rigorous after-test of

good sense, as far as I was able to determine what good sense is. Your sister will judge, from my being so minute, that I have been much interested in her poetical efforts. This very poem highly delighted me; the sentiment meets with my entire approbation, and it is feelingly and poetically treated. Female authorship is to be shunned as bringing in its train more and heavier evils than have presented themselves to your sister's ingenuous mind. No true friend, I am sure, will endeavour to shake her resolution to remain in her own quiet and healthful obscurity. This is not said with a view to discourage her from writing, nor have the remarks made above any aim of the kind; they are rather intended to assist her in writing with more permanent satisfaction to herself. She will probably write less in proportion as she subjects her feelings to logical forms, but the range of her sensibilities, so far from being narrowed, will extend as she improves in the habit of looking at things through the steady light of words; and, to speak a little metaphysically, words are not a mere *vehicle*, but they are *powers* either to kill or to animate.

I shall be truly happy to receive at your leisure the prose MSS. which you promised me. I shall write to Mr. F. Edgeworth in a few days. I cannot conclude without reminding you of your promise to bring your sister to see us next summer; we will then talk over the poems at leisure.

Yours most sincerely,

Wm. Wordsworth.

CCCCXCIX

William Wordsworth to Francis Beaufort Edgeworth

1829.

. . . As you were so much struck with the yew-tree at Mucross, do not fail, if ever you come near Askeaton, to visit the ruins of its abbey, where you will find a much finer cloister, with a tree standing exactly in the centre as at Mucross. The tree is infinitely inferior to that of Mucross in gloomy grandeur, but the whole effect being of the same kind, the impression on my mind at Mucross was not so deep as it would have been if I had not seen Askeaton before.

The faults I found with Killarney were, the bog between the town and the lake, the long tame ridge which you complain of, the want of groves and timber trees, though there is a prodigality of wood, the heavy shape of the highest hill, Mangerton, and the unluckiness of Carrantuohill being so placed as only to combine with the lake from its tamest parts. Your objection to the rocky knolls in the upper lake, as savouring of conceits in Nature, is a sensation of your own, which it would be absurd to reason against. I did not feel it when on the spot, nor can I admit it now. . . .

D

William Wordsworth to Catherine Grace Godwin[1]

[1829, probably.]

Dear Madam,

I have been long in your debt, so long that I regret not having written my acknowledgment on the day I received your book. This would have been done, but I felt there would be little value in such a return for the mark of respect you have paid me; and I relied on your candid interpretation of any delay that might take place. I wished to read your volume carefully through before you heard from me. I have done so, and with much pleasure. Wherever it is read, such poetry cannot but do you honour. It is neither wanting in feeling, nor in that much rarer gift which is the soul of poetry, — imagination. There is a great command of language also, and occasionally fine versification; but here, and in some other points of workmanship, you are most defective, especially in the blank verse. Am I right in supposing that several of these pieces have been written at different periods of life? *The Wanderer*, for example, though full of varied interest, appears to me, in point of versification, and in some respects of style, much inferior to *Destiny*, a very striking poem. This, and the *Monk of Camaldoli*, are, in my judgment, the best executed pieces in the volume. Both evince extraordinary powers.

The fault of your blank verse is, that it is not sufficiently broken. You are aware that it is infinitely the

[1] Mrs. Catherine Grace Godwin (1798–1845), poetess, author of *The Wanderer's Legacy* (1829), *Poetical Works* (1854). Mr. and Mrs. Godwin lived at Barbon, near Kirkby-Lonsdale, from 1824 onward. — Ed.

most difficult metre to manage, as is clear from so few having succeeded in it. The Spenserian stanza is a fine structure of verse; but it is also almost insurmountably difficult. You have succeeded in the broken and more impassioned movement, — of which Lord Byron has given good instances, — but it is a form of verse ill adapted to conflicting passion; and it is not injustice to say that the stanza is spoiled in Lord Byron's hands; his own strong and ungovernable passions blinded him as to its character. It is equally unfit for narrative. *Circumstances* are difficult to manage in any kind of verse, except the dramatic, where the warmth of the action makes the reader indifferent to those delicacies of phrase and sound upon which so much of the charm of other poetry depends. If you write more in this stanza, leave Lord Byron for Spenser. In him the stanza is seen in its perfection. It is exquisitely harmonious also in Thomson's hands, and fine in Beattie's *Minstrel;* but these two latter poems are merely descriptive and sentimental; and you will observe that Spenser never gives way to violent and conflicting passion, and that his narrative is bare of circumstances, slow in movement, and (for modern relish) too much clogged with description. Excuse my dwelling so much on this dry subject; but as you have succeeded so well in the arrangement of this metre, perhaps you will not be sorry to hear my opinion of its character. One great objection to it (an insurmountable one, I think, for circumstantial narrative) is the poverty of our language in rhymes.

But to recur to your volume. I was everywhere more or less interested in it. Upon the whole, I think I like best *Destiny*, and the *Monk*, but mainly for the reasons above given. *The Wanderer's Legacy*, being upon a

large scale and so true to your own feelings, has left a lively impression upon my mind ; and a moral purpose is answered, by exhibiting youthful love under such illusion with regard to the real value of its object. The *Seal Hunters* is an affecting poem, but I think you linger too long on the prelusive description. I could speak with pleasure of many other pieces, so that you have no grounds for the apprehensions you express, as far, at least, as I am concerned.

As most likely the beauties of this country will tempt you and Mr. Godwin to return to it, I need not say that I should be happy to renew my acquaintance with you both ; and I should with pleasure avail myself of that opportunity to point out certain minutiæ of phrase in your volume, where you have been misled by bad example, especially of the Scotch. The popularity of some of their writings has done no little harm to the English language, for the present at least.

Believe me, etc.,

W. WORDSWORTH.

1830

DI

William Wordsworth to Charles Lamb

Sunday, Jan. 10, 1830.

My dear Lamb,

A whole twelve-months have I been a letter in your debt. I have been sufficiently punished by self-reproach.

I liked your play[1] marvellously, having no objection to it but one which strikes me as applicable to a large majority of plays, those of Shakespeare himself not entirely excepted; I mean a little degradation of character for a more dramatic turn of plot. Your present of Hone's book[2] was very acceptable, and so much so that your gift of the book is the cause why I did not write long ago. I wished to enter a little minutely into a notice of the dramatic extracts, and on account of the smallness of the print deferred doing so till longer days would allow me to read without candle light, which I have long since given up. But alas! when the days lengthened, my eyesight departed; and for many months I could not read three

[1] Probably *The Wife's Trial; or the Intruding Widow: A Dramatic Poem* (1827). This play was sent by Lamb to Charles Kemble at Covent Garden in August, 1827, but was not accepted. See *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, edited by E. V. Lucas, Vol. V, "Poems and Plays." — Ed.

[2] Doubtless his *Table Book* (1828). — Ed.

minutes at a time. You will be sorry to hear that this infirmity still hangs about me, and cuts me off from reading almost altogether.

But how are you? And how is your dear sister? I long much, as we all do, to know. For ourselves this last year, owing to my sister's dangerous illness — the effects of which are not yet got over — has been an anxious one and melancholy. But no more of this. My sister has probably told you everything about this family, so that I may conclude with less scruple by assuring you of my sincere and faithful affection for you, and your dear sister.

W. WORDSWORTH.

My son takes this to London.

[To the above letter Dorothy Wordsworth added the following: —]

Sunday, 10th.

My brother has given me this to enclose with my own. His account of me is far too doleful. I am, I assure you, perfectly well; and it is only in order to become strong, as heretofore, that I confine myself mainly to the house; and yet, were I to trust my feelings merely, I would say that I am strong already. His eyes, alas! are very weak, and so will, I fear, remain through life, but with proper care he does not suffer much.

DII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, Wednesday.

My Lord,

. . . There is one point also delicate to touch upon and hazardous to deal with, but of prime importance in this

crisis. The question, as under the conduct of the present ministers, is closely connecting itself with religion. Now after all, if we are to be preserved from utter confusion, it is religion and morals, and conscience, which must do the work. The religious part of the community, especially those attached to the Church of England, must and *do* feel that neither the Church as an establishment, nor its points of faith as a church, nor Christianity itself as governed by Scripture, ought to be left long, if it can be prevented, in the hands which manage our affairs.

But I am running into unpardonable length. I took up the pen principally to express a hope that your Lordship may have continued to see the question in the light which affords the only chance of preserving the nation from several generations, perhaps, of confusion and crime and wretchedness.

Excuse the liberty I have taken, and believe me most faithfully,

Your Lordship's much obliged
W. WORDSWORTH.

DIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, 25th March, [1830].

My dear Sir,

. . . My brother was much interested by the information you had gathered from your vagrant neighbours, the gipsies ; so was I, and every member of this family, and we sincerely thank you for it, and for the readiness with which you complied with my brother's wishes. He intends, if you have no objection, to send the account to be inserted in the *Naturalists' Magazine*, if the matter be thought new or sufficiently important. To us, as I have said, it was very interesting.

. . . My niece has been with Miss Southey a fortnight at Keswick, and, if weather permit, her brother purposes riding over to Keswick from Moresby to-morrow, to conduct her back with him; and he hopes for her company during a whole month, a great loss to the father at home! . . .

Believe me, dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

DIV

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
5th April, 1830.

My dear Montagu,

I ought to have thanked you long ago for the twelfth volume of Lord Bacon, which I received through John; and also for your little treatise on Laughter, which has amused me much. You have rendered good service to the public by this edition of the works of one of the greatest men the world has produced. I wish I had been younger to make a more worthy use of so valuable a present. Let me ask whether it would not have been better to print the letters — of which the last volume consists — not as you have done, but in chronological order, only taking care to note from what collection the several letters were taken? I should certainly have much preferred that arrangement, so would Southey; but perhaps you have reasons for this plan which do not strike me. With many thanks, I remain, dear M.,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DV

William Wordsworth to John Gardner

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
5th April, 1830.

Dear Sir,

I admire the delicacy with which you decline purchasing this work [1] to my injury. These piracies do no credit to the Parisian publisher. As far as relates to the Continent, I am rather glad of this practice, but surely it is unfair to authors to be deprived of such benefit as they might draw from the sale of their works among their own countrymen and in their native land; the more so when the short duration of copyright, as allowed by our law, is considered. That law at present acts as a premium upon mediocracy, by tempting authors to aim only at immediate effect.

Some years ago I named to my publishers my wish to try a cheaper edition, such as you recommend, but I was assured by them that the return of profit to myself would be little or nothing. Readers, I am aware, have since increased much and are daily increasing. Perhaps also my own powers are gaining ground upon the public; but you cannot have failed to observe what pains are taken in many quarters to obstruct their circulation and to lower their character. Be it so, you would probably say; and that is a still stronger reason for their author putting them in the way of being more generally known. The misrepresentations — whether arising from incapacity, presumption, envy, or personal malice — would be best refuted by the books becoming as accessible as may be.

1 The Galignani edition of his poems. — Ed.

I trust that it would be so; but still, having neither inherited a fortune, nor having been a maker of money, and being now advanced in life with a family to survive me, I cannot be indifferent to the otherwise base consideration of some pecuniary gain.

The edition you possess of 1827 is getting low, and a new one will probably be called for ere long. My intention at present is to reprint the whole, pretty much in the same form, only I shall print *two* sonnets in a page, a greater number of *lines* also, and exclude all blank pages (called, I believe, by the printers "fat"); and, in this case, I hope to reduce the price of the work, and perhaps to compress it into four volumes, though there will be a good deal of additional matter. This, however, will be printed separately also to accommodate the purchasers of the former editions.[1] . . .

DVI

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

RYDAL MOUNT, April 6, 1830.

My dear Mr. Gordon,

You are kind in noticing with thanks my rambling notes.[2]

We have had here a few days of delicious summer weather. It appeared with the suddenness of a pantomimic

[1] This letter was meant to be shown to the Longmans by Gardner, as Wordsworth adds that if he (Gardner) "thought it worth while to call on them, this letter would be your introduction. State your wishes and your reasons, and hear what they have to say. If your proposal could be reconciled with a reasonable emolument to myself, it would gratify me to adopt it. . . . Is it not your proposal that there should be two editions of different sizes?" — Ed.

[2] On a proposed tour. — Christopher Wordsworth.

trick, stayed longer than we had a right to expect, and was as rapidly succeeded by high wind, bitter cold, and winter snow over hill and dale.

I am not surprised that you are so well pleased with Mr. Quillinan. The more you see of him the better you will like him. You ask what are my employments. According to Dr. Johnson they are such as entitle me to high commendation, for I am not only making two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, but a dozen. In plain language, I am draining a bit of spongy ground.[1] In the field where this goes on I am making a green terrace that commands a beautiful view of our two lakes, Rydal and Windermere, and more than two miles of intervening vale, with the stream visible by glimpses flowing through it. I shall have great pleasure in showing you this among the other returns which I hope one day to make for your kindness. Adieu,

Yours,

W. W.

DVII

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, April 22d, 1830.

My dear Friend,

Your scrap of a letter gave us more satisfaction than I can express; but I assure you we had much rather you had given us a real letter bearing the postmark of the Eternal City. . . . I will begin with a sober review of the autumn and winter, as they have passed away with us in our quiet home; leaving all public and general matters to the newspapers, which no doubt you read more regularly

[1] In Dora's field. — Ed.

than we do. I think you left England about the time of John's exchanging his Leicestershire curacy for the small rectory of Moresby in Cumberland. We left Whitwick with regret, but have now many reasons for rejoicing in the change; and but three weeks after parting with our kind friend Lady Beaumont, her sudden death tended to reconcile us, for without her Coleorton and Whitwick would not have been the same places they used to be. An unusually severe winter, and low wages, and want of work in the stocking factory on which Whitwick depends, in a few months completely reconciled us to our removal from a place where poverty and distress, which we could not effectually relieve, would have daily met our eyes. John is very happy at Moresby, in a small parish, yet sufficiently peopled both by poor and rich to require and call forth constant moderate exertion, without that depressing accompanying conviction that all we can do is of no avail for permanent relief. John's income is not much larger than at Whitwick, but he is a richer man, and is comfortably habited in lodgings where he can at any time receive one or two of us. His mother spent three weeks with him in the winter, and Dora is now his companion and will remain till fetched home by her father, who is in sad want of her. But he willingly submits, the young people being so very happy, and her health improving with sea air and horse exercise with her brother. They have each a pony. . . . With an inexhaustible stock of lively spirits and of activity within doors, she is utterly unable to follow the example of her mother's youth, and mine, in walking.

The family summer plans are not yet fixed, but I think the father and daughter will be tripping off to Cambridge before the commencement, and perhaps my sister may

visit her own relations in the county of Durham at the same time. As for me, it seems to be decreed that I must stay at home, and surely it is no punishment to be confined to this beautiful spot. I have been enacting the invalid ever since the month of November, though in truth I have had no ailment since the beginning of January. Whenever the weather has been tolerable I have gone out in the pony-chaise or walked, but not farther than the terrace. Since the trees began to bud I have extended my walks a little further. In compliance with the judgment and advice of those who, I suppose, are much better judges of what is safe than I am myself, I shall continue to use similar caution during the whole of next summer and the following winter, if I live so long; and after that time I hope I may be safely trusted to my own feelings as a guide in ascertaining the measure of my strength. In the meantime it is certainly my duty to submit to be guided by those who have already suffered so much anxiety on my account, and there is no hardship in it; for this different mode of life has no effect whatever upon my spirits, and certainly it has agreed with my health. It was a sad illness I had at Whitwick, and again I was very ill at Halifax, whence I came to Rydal the first week of September, and since have not slept one night from home.

My brother has enjoyed his accustomed good health, and, though he passed his sixtieth birthday on the seventh of this month, is really as active, and in as good walking plight, as when we crossed the Alps in 1820. My sister, too, retains her strength and activity wonderfully. Dora longs to go to Rome; the father would dearly like it, the mother would fall into any plans that could reasonably be formed for such a purpose, and as for me, I think I

should lack none of the zeal which would have accompanied me thither twenty years ago; but we say not much about it. We are past the scheming age (except Dora), and there seem to be so many obstacles that I cannot think we shall ever accomplish a journey of such magnitude; and, indeed, whenever I venture upon a *wish*, it carries me no farther than dear Switzerland. But who knows what circumstances may do for us! When you come home you will so rouse and inspire my brother's aged heart by his own fireside that strange schemes may arise, and all be realized with as much ease as our journey of 1820! . . . My brother has laid his poetry aside for two or three months. He has enough of new matter for a small volume, which we wish him to publish; but I think he will not, he so dislikes publishing. A new edition of his poems will soon be called for. He has lately been busied, day after day, out of doors, among workmen who are making us another new and most delightful terrace. I hope you will soon come and walk upon it, so I shall not describe it.

This leads my thoughts to the woful state of money and the "money market." Every year we grow poorer, interest so low, rents not paid, etc.! But, in this happy remote corner, little do we see of what is endured among the lower orders; though we see and know that all who are of our own condition experience a terrible change. Mr. Owen[1] is instructing the Londoners in "the science of society," and *he* is to point out a remedy. The Parliament folks seem to be quite easy in the discovery that they can do nothing. It seems the emigrations are numerous both from the manufacturing and farming districts.

[1] Robert Owen (1771–1858) founder of English socialism, author of *A New View of Society*, etc. — Ed.

The latter are in an untilled state. Mrs. Hutchinson writes that prices are so low, and poor rates so heavy, she knows not what will become of them in a few years. They have long had to pay rents from their stock property.

We have had one most delightful letter from Charles and Mary Lamb since you left England. *She* writes as if very happy and contented in being released from housekeeping cares, and gives on the whole a good account of her brother, though from his own letter (written with quiet spirit and humour) we could hardly know whether he was oppressed by being hurried out of his usual course or not. S. T. Coleridge continues to live at Highgate as usual, attacked by occasional fits of sharp illness, but always, to a certain point, recovering from them; and, I believe, he is publishing some new work upon the old abstruse subjects.[1] His daughter is happily settled near him in London, but they cannot see much of each other. To walk is impossible, and to be otherwise conveyed far too expensive for the wife of a young lawyer who has his fortune to make. Mrs. Coleridge is with her son Derwent, who does well in his curacy and school. Hartley is at Grasmere, writing now and then for *Blackwood* and the annuals; and, when he has money in his pocket, wandering off nobody knows whither. Miss Hutchinson is with the Southeys. Southey was off work, but is better, and busy as ever. What he does is wonderful. He was was much affected by the death of his brother's wife, Mrs. Dr. Southey.

We have good news of William from Bremen; but his health, in common with that of all Mr. Papendich's family, suffered much from the severity of the winter. William was an eyewitness of the loss of lives and

[1] See letter of May 5th, 1830, to William Pearson. — Ed.

houses from flood when the ice broke. He seems to be much beloved in Mr. P.'s family, and is exceedingly attached to them. . . . No doubt you have seen our nephew Christopher's name at the top of his Classical Tripos. The first classical medal has since been adjudged to him. The Master of Trinity enjoys better health than a year or two ago. I hope, my dear friend, that you receive comfortable letters from your brother. I was much concerned to hear of the death of your nephew's son, both for his sake, and his father's, and yours. This is a poor letter to travel so far; but I know you will be glad to hear of us and to receive our assurances of affectionate remembrance, in which we three (the only ones at home) do heartily join. . . . Adieu, my dear friend. Believe me ever,

Yours affectionately,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

We have had a very wet and mostly cold spring after an unrelenting winter. How is it with you? Our shrubs are budding, larches green, but the trees very backward, and the soil is so soddened with wet that even the flowers look comfortless.

D. W.

DVIII

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

RYDAL MOUNT, April 27, 1830.

My dear Brother,

Was Mr. Rose's course of sermons upon education? The more I reflect upon the subject, the more I am convinced that positive instruction, even of a religious

character, is much overrated. The education of man, and above all of a Christian, is the education of *duty*, which is most forcibly taught by the business and concerns of life ; of which, even for children — especially the children of the poor — book learning is but a small part. There is an officious disposition on the part of the upper and middle classes to precipitate the tendency of the people towards intellectual culture in a manner subversive of their own happiness, and dangerous to the peace of society. It is mournful to observe of how little avail are lessons of piety taught at school, if household attentions and obligations be neglected in consequence of the time taken up in school tuition ; and if the head be stuffed with vanity, from the gentlemanliness of the employment of reading. Farewell.

W. W.

DIX

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Begun many days ago, ended 27th April, [1830.]

. . . My brother, though he passed his sixtieth birthday on the seventh of this month, is as good a walker as most of the best young ones of twenty, and is not much inferior to what he was himself at that age. . . . The last letters from William brought a good account of his health. He is very happy. Mr. Papendich speaks very favourably of him in all respects, but seems well aware of his peculiar delicacy of constitution, and therefore of the absolute necessity of regular exercise out of doors, especially on horseback. . . . Sarah H. is at Keswick. We had some hope of the Southeys becoming our neighbours ; but they have renewed the lease of their present house,

and really I am disinterested enough to be glad, as, though wishing to be near us, they dreaded a removal. Poor Mrs. Coleridge! we miss her very much out of the country, though we saw little of her. She regrets what she has lost bitterly, yet is well pleased with her daughter-in-law, and has great comfort in Derwent; but, at her age, it is a great change. . . . What, however, is worst of all is Hartley's hopeless state. We had provided good lodgings for him. He had no one want, was liked by the people of the house, and for seven weeks was steady and industrious. Money came to repay him for his work, and what does he do? Instead of discharging just debts, he pays a score off at a public house, and with eight sovereigns in his pocket takes off, is now wandering somewhere, and will go on wandering till some charitable person leads the vagrant home. We have only heard of his lodging at first at different inns — this no doubt while the money lasted — and since of his having been seen on the roads, and having lodged in this barn or that. It has been my sad office to report to his poor mother of his doings, but my late reports have been of a cheering kind. I now dread the task that is before me. I shall not, however, write till he is again housed with the charitable matron who is willing again to receive him. You will perhaps say, my dear friend, "Why do you not rouse the country, and send after him?" . . .

Yours affectionately,

D. WORDSWORTH.

DX

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

May, 1830.

I am truly obliged, my dear sir, by your valuable present of Webster's Dramatic Works and the *Specimens*.[1] Your publisher was right in insisting upon the whole of Webster, otherwise the book might have been superseded, either by an entire edition separately given to the world, or in some *corpus* of the dramatic writers. The poetic genius of England, with the exception of Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and a very few more, is to be sought in her drama. How it grieves one that there is so little probability of those valuable authors being read except by the curious! I questioned my friend Charles Lamb whether it would answer for some person of real taste to undertake abridging the plays that are not likely to be read as wholes, and telling such parts of the story in brief abstract as were ill managed in the drama. He thought it would not. I, however, am inclined to think it would.

The account of your indisposition gives me much concern. It pleases me, however, to see that, though you may suffer, your industry does not relax; and I hope that your pursuits are rather friendly than injurious to your health.

You are quite correct in your notice of my obligation to Dr. Darwin.[2] In the first edition of the poem it was acknowledged in a note, which slipped out of its place in

[1] *Specimens of British Poetesses.* — A. Dyce.

[2] See the poem *To Enterprise*, ll. 114–116, first published in 1822. — Ed.

the last, along with some others. In putting together that edition I was obliged to cut up several copies; and as several of the poems also changed their places, some confusion and omission, and, in one instance, a repetition, was the consequence; nothing, however, so bad as in the edition of 1820, where a long poem, *The Lament of Mary Queen of Scots*, was by mistake altogether omitted. Another unpleasantness arose from the same cause; for, in some instances, notwithstanding repeated charges to the printer, you have only two Spenserian stanzas in a page (I speak now of the last edition) instead of three; and there is the same irregularity in printing other forms of stanzas.

You must indeed have been fond of that ponderous quarto, *The Excursion*, to lug it about as you did.[1] In the edition of 1827 it was diligently revised, and the sense — in several instances — got into less room; yet still it is a long poem for these feeble and fastidious times. You would honour me much by accepting a copy of my poetical works; but I think it better to defer offering it to you till a new edition is called for, which will be ere long, as I understand the present is getting low.

A word or two about Collins. You know what importance I attach to following strictly the last copy of the text of an author; and I do not blame you for printing in the *Ode to Evening* "brawling" spring; but surely the epithet is most unsuitable to the time, the very worst, I think, that could have been chosen.

I now come to Lady Winchelsea. First, however, let me say a few words upon one or two other authoresses

[1] I had mentioned to Mr. W. that when I had a curacy in Cornwall I used frequently to carry *The Excursion* down to the sea-shore, and read it there. — A. Dyce.

in your *Specimens*. British poetesses make but a poor figure in the *Poems by Eminent Ladies*.[1] But observing how injudicious that selection is in the case of Lady Winchelsea, and of Mrs. Aphra Behn[2] (from whose attempts they are miserably copious), I have thought something better might have been chosen by more competent persons who had access to the volumes of the several writers. In selecting from Mrs. Pilkington, I regret that you omitted (look at page 255) *Sorrow*, or at least that you did not abridge it. The first and third paragraph are very affecting. See also *Expostulation*, page 258; it reminds me strongly of one of the "Penitential Hymns" of Burns. The few lines upon St. John the Baptist, by Mrs. Killigrew (Vol. II, p. 6), are pleasing. A beautiful elegy of Miss Warton (sister to the poets of that name[3]) upon the death of her father has escaped your notice; nor can I refer you to it. Has the Duchess of Newcastle written much verse?[4] Her Life of her lord, and the extracts in your book, and in the *Eminent Ladies*, are all that I have seen of hers. The *Mirth and Melancholy* has so many fine strokes of imagination that I cannot but think there must be merit in many parts of her writings. How beautiful those lines, from "I dwell in groves," to the conclusion, "Yet better loved, the more that I am known," excepting the four verses after "Walk up the hills." And surely the latter verse of the couplet,

> The tolling bell which for the dead rings out;
> A mill where rushing waters run about;

[1] Published in two volumes, 1755. — Ed.
[2] Poetess, novelist, translator (1640—1689). — Ed.
[3] Joseph Warton, 1722–1800. Thomas Warton, 1728–1790. — Ed.
[4] *Poems and Fancies* (1653). She and her husband together wrote twelve volumes folio, containing plays, poems, essays, etc. — Ed.

is very noticeable: no person could have hit upon that union of images without being possessed of true poetic feeling. Could you tell me anything of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu more than is to be learned from Pope's letters and her own? She seems to have been destined for something much higher and better than she became. A parallel between her genius and character and that of Lady Winchelsea her contemporary (though somewhat prior to her) would be well worth drawing.

And now at last for the poems of Lady Winchelsea. I will transcribe a note from a blank leaf of my own edition, written by me before I saw the scanty notice of her in Walpole. (By-the-bye, that book has always disappointed me, when I have consulted it upon any particular occasion.) The note runs thus: "The *Fragment*,[1] page 280, seems to prove that she was attached to James Second, as does page 42, and that she suffered by the Revolution. The most celebrated of these poems, but far from the best, is *The Spleen*. The *Petition for an Absolute Retreat* and *A Nocturnal Reverie* are of much superior merit. See also for favourable specimens, page 156, *On the Death of Mr. Thynne;* page 263; and *Fragment*, page 280. The fable of *Love, Death, and Reputation*, page 29, is ingeniously told." Thus far my own note. I will now be more particular. Page 3, "Our vanity," etc., and page 163 are noticeable as giving some account from herself of her authorship. See also page 148, where she alludes to *The Spleen*. She was unlucky in her models, Pindaric odes and French fables. But see page 70, *The Blindness*

[1] This was written by Wordsworth on the fly-leaf of *Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions. Written by a Lady* [Anne Kingsmill, afterwards Countess of Winchelsea]. London, 1713. He incorporated it in a subsequent letter to Dyce.

of Elymas, for proof that she could write with powers of a high order when her own individual character and personal feelings were not concerned. For less striking proofs of this power, see page 4, *All is Vanity*, omitting verses five and six, and reading "clouds that are lost and gone," etc. There is merit in the next two stanzas; and the last stanza towards the close contains a fine reproof of the ostentation of Louis XIV, and one magnificent verse,

Spent the astonished hours, forgetful to adore.

But my paper is nearly out. As far as "For my garments," page 36, the poem is charming; it then falls off, but revives at page 39, "Give me there"; page 41, etc., reminds me of Dyer's *Gongar Hill*. It revives on page 47, towards the bottom, and concludes with sentiments worthy of the writer, though not quite so happily expressed as in other parts of the poem. See pages 82, 92, "Whilst in the Muses' paths I stray," page 113. *The Cautious Lovers*, page 118, has little poetic merit, but is worth reading as characteristic of the author. See also page 143, *Birthday of Lady Catherine Lupton*, "Deep lines of honour," etc., to "maturer age." Page 151,[1] if shortened, would be striking; page 154[2] is characteristic; page 159, from "Meanwhile ye living parents," to the close, omitting "Nor could we hope," and the five following verses, also page 217, *In Praise of Writing Letters*, last paragraph, and page 259,[3] *that* you have.[4] Also pages 262,[5] 263;[6] and page 280.

[1] Here a new poem, entitled *The Change*, begins. — Ed.

[2] Here another poem, entitled *Enquiry after Peace*, begins. — Ed.

[3] The poem entitled *Life's Progress*. — Ed.

[4] Dyce writes, "Wordsworth means that I have inserted that poem in my *Specimens of British Poetesses*. — Ed.

[5] The poem named *Hope*. — Ed.

[6] The poem called *Moral Songs*. — Ed.

Was Lady Winchelsea a Roman Catholic? Page 290, *The Tree*, "And to the clouds proclaim thy fall?": on page 291, *A Nocturnal Reverie*, omit "When scattered glow-worms," and the next couplet. I have no more room.[1]

Ever faithfully yours,

W. W.

DXI

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

[1830.]

My dear Mr. Gordon,

. . . I cannot but deeply regret that the late King of France and his ministers should have been so infatuated. Their stupidity, not to say their crimes, has given an impulse to the revolutionary and democratic spirit throughout Europe which is premature, and from which much immediate evil may be apprehended, whatever things may settle into at last. Whereas, had the government conformed to the increasing knowledge of the people, and not surrendered itself to the counsels of the priests and the bigoted royalists, things might have been kept in an even course to the mutual improvement and benefit of both governed and governors.

In France incompatible things are aimed at, — a monarchy and democracy to be united without an intervening aristocracy to constitute a graduated scale of power and influence. I cannot conceive how an hereditary monarchy can exist without an hereditary peerage in a country so large as France, nor how either can maintain

[1] This letter, and the one copied on the first pages of Lady Winchelsea's poems by Dyce, is scarcely intelligible, if the volume of poems is not consulted. — Ed.

its ground if the law of the Napoleon code, compelling equal division of property by will, be not repealed. And I understand that a vast majority of the French are decidedly adverse to the repeal of that law, which, I cannot but think, will ere long be found injurious both to France and, in its collateral effects, to the rest of Europe.

Ever, dear Mr. Gordon,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DXII

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson[1]

Rydal Mount, May 5th, 1830.

My dear Sir,

My brother would have had great pleasure in lending you Mr. Coleridge's new work,[2] had he possessed it. I am sorry to say he does not; nor has Mr. Hartley Coleridge yet received it. I hope the book may find its way hither in course of time, and then you will have an opportunity of reading it; so pray do not put yourself to the expense of buying. Much as I wish for the prosperity and sale of my friend's writings, I should be very sorry to hear that you were a purchaser.

My brother intends sending *The Hedgehog* to the Naturalists' Magazine, and probably, I should think,

[1] Of Borderow, Crosthwaite; ex-banker, student of literature, and naturalist. — Ed.

[2] Doubtless *On the Constitution of the Church and State, according to the idea of each; with aid toward a right judgment on the late Catholic Bill.* — Ed.

with a few words from himself. After it has appeared there, it might be extracted for the Kendal papers, but better not insert there first. This reminds me, that when I wrote to you, and also when I saw you, I forgot to ask (as I had intended doing) for a sight of the little poem, which you said you had written, on behalf of that poor, injured creature, many years ago. I hope you will not refuse to let us see it, however much you may be dissatisfied with your performance.

My brother intends joining his son and daughter at Moresby before the end of this week; and as he purposes to remain with them a fortnight, you had better defer your visit a little while. . . .

The new terrace will be finished to-morrow, much to our satisfaction. It is a beautiful walk, and we hope the draining will be found complete. We have much enjoyed the late fine weather, living almost the day through in the open air.

. . . I am quite well.

I am, dear sir,

Yours truly,

D. WORDSWORTH.

DXIII

William Wordsworth to Alexander Dyce

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL.
May 10th, 1830.

My dear Sir,

My last was, for want of room, concluded so abruptly that I avail myself of an opportunity of sending you a few additional words upon the same subject.

I observed that Lady Winchelsea was unfortunate in her models, Pindaricks and Fables; nor does it appear from her *Aristomenes* that she would have been more successful than her contemporaries if she had cultivated tragedy. She had sensibility sufficient for the tender parts of dramatic writing, but in the stormy and tumultuous she would probably have failed altogether. She seems to have made it a moral and religious duty to control her feelings, lest they should mislead her. Of love, as a passion, she was afraid; no doubt from a conscious inability to soften it down into friendship. I have often applied two lines of her drama (page 318) to her affections:

> Love's soft bands,
> His gentle cords of hyacinths and roses,
> Wove in the dewy spring when storms are silent.

By-the-bye, in the next page are two impassioned lines spoken to a person fainting:

> Then let me hug and press thee into life,
> And lend thee motion from my beating heart.

From the style and versification of this — so much her longest work — I conjecture that Lady Winchelsea had but a slender acquaintance with the drama of the earlier part of the preceding century. Yet her style in rhyme is often admirable, chaste, tender, and vigorous; entirely free from sparkle, antithesis, and that over-culture which reminds one — by its broad glare, its stiffness, and heaviness — of the double daisies of the garden, compared with their modest and sensitive kindred in the fields. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I think there is a good deal of resemblance in her style and versification to that of Tickell, to whom Dr. Johnson justly assigns a high place

among the minor poets; and of whom Goldsmith rightly observes, that there is a strain of ballad-thinking through all his poetry, and it is very attractive. Pope, in that production of his boyhood, the *Ode to Solitude*, and in his *Essay on Criticism*, has furnished proofs that at one period of his life he felt the charm of a sober and subdued style, which he afterwards abandoned for one that is — to my taste at least — too pointed and ambitious, and for a versification too timidly balanced.

If a second edition of your *Specimens* should be called for, you might add from Helen Maria Williams the *Sonnet to the Moon*, and that to *Twilight*;[1] and a few more from Charlotte Smith,[2] particularly

> I love thee, mournful, sober-suited night.

At the close of a sonnet of Miss Seward's[3] are two fine verses:

> Come, that I may not hear the winds of night,
> Nor count the heavy eave-drops as they fall.

You have well characterised the poetic powers of this lady; but, after all, her verses please me, with all their faults, better than those of Mrs. Barbauld,[4] who, with much higher powers of mind, was spoiled as a poetess by being a dissenter, and concerned with a dissenting academy. One of the most pleasing passages in her

[1] Helen Maria Williams (1762–1827), author of many poems, tales, novels, and letters. Compare Wordsworth's *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VIII, p. 209. — Ed.

[2] Charlotte Smith (1749–1806) wrote *Elegiac Sonnets*, etc., (1784). — Ed.

[3] Anna Seward (1747–1809), called "The Swan of Lichfield," wrote *Original Sonnets*, and *Odes paraphrased from Horace* (1799). — Ed.

[4] Anna Lætitia Barbauld (1743–1825) wrote *Miscellaneous Poems* (1773), *Ode to Spring*, etc. — Ed.

poetry is the close of the lines upon *Life*, written, I believe, when she was not less than eighty years of age:

Life, we have been long together, etc.[1]

You have given a specimen of that ever-to-be-pitied victim of Swift, *Vanessa*. I have somewhere a short piece of hers upon her passion for Swift, which well deserves to be added. But I am becoming tedious, which you will ascribe to a well-meant endeavour to make you some return for your obliging attentions.

I remain, dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DXIV

William Wordsworth to John Gardner

WHITEHAVEN (I return home in a few days),
May 19th, 1830.

My dear Sir,

I feel that I ought to thank you for your judicious letter, and for the pains you have taken towards settling the question of the eligibility of low-priced publications.

Messrs. Longman talk strangely when they say that my annual account will show what is advisable. How can that show anything but what number of purchases I have had? It cannot tell me how many I have missed by the heavy price. Again, Messrs. L. affirm that my buyers are of that class who do not regard prices; but that class, never perhaps very large, is every day growing

[1] On hearing these lines repeated by Henry Crabb Robinson, Wordsworth exclaimed, "Well, I am not given to envy other people their good things, but I *do* wish I had written *that!*" — C. W.

smaller, with the reduced incomes of the time; and, besides, in this opinion I believe these gentlemen to be altogether mistaken. My poetry, less than any other of the day, is adapted to the taste of the luxurious, and of those who value themselves upon the privilege of wealth and station. And though it be true that several passages are too abstruse for the ordinary reader, yet the main body of it is as well fitted (if my aim be not altogether missed) to the bulk of the people — both in sentiment and language — as that of any of my contemporaries. I agree with you (and for the same reason) that nothing can be inferred from the failure of cheap publication in ——'s case.

To the above consideration I would add that of the existence of pirated editions, and above all an apprehension that there is a growing prejudice against high-priced books. Indeed, I am inclined to think, with my friend Mr. Southey, that shortly few books will be purchased except low-priced ones, or those that are highly ornamented, for persons who delight in such luxuries. These considerations all seem in favour of the experiment which you recommend. Yet I am far from sure that it would answer. It is not to be questioned that the perpetually supplied stimulus of novels stands much in the way of the purer interest which used to attach to poetry; and, although the novelists, in but very few instances, retain more than the hold of part of a season upon public attention, a fresh crop springs up every hour. . . .

If I could persuade myself that the retail bookseller you speak of is not mistaken in his notion that he could sell *ten* copies, or less than half of that number, were the price something under a pound, when he now sells *one*, I would venture upon such an edition. I ought to say to you, however, that I have changed my intention of

making additions at present, and should confine myself to intermixing the few poems that were published in *The Keepsake* of the year before last.

I have already stated to you my notions of the extreme injustice of the law of copyright, if it has not been misrepresented to me, for I never saw the Act of Parliament; but I am told that, when an author dies, such of his works as have been twice fourteen years before the public are public property; and that his heirs have no pecuniary interest in anything that he may leave behind beyond the same period. My days are, in course of nature, drawing towards a close; and I think it would be best, in order to secure some especial value to any collection of my works that might be printed after my decease, to reserve a certain number of new pieces, to be intermingled with that collection. I am acquainted with a distinguished author who means to hold back during his lifetime all the corrections and additions in his several works for the express purpose of benefiting his heirs, by the superiority which these improvements will give to the pieces which may have become the property of the public.

I do sincerely hope that the law on this point will one day or other be brought nearer to justice and reason. Take only my own comparatively insignificant case. Many of my poems have been upwards of thirty years subject to criticism, and are disputed about as keenly as ever, and appear to be read much more. In fact, thirty years are no adequate test for works of imagination, even from second and third rate writers, much less from those of the first order, as we see in the instances of Shakespeare and Milton. . . .

I remain, dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DXV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

June 2, 1830.

. . . As to publishing anything myself, I am not prepared for it, but I believe the edition of my poems of 1827 is now low; and, in consequence of an urgent application, I have entertained some thoughts of republishing, when this edition is all sold, in a cheap form — something under a pound — instead of 45 s., the present price. I should like to know from experienced persons whether such a mode of publication would be likely to repay me. Perhaps you may be able to throw some light on the subject. . . .

Very sincerely yours,

W. WORDSWORTH.

DXVI

William Wordsworth to Sir Walter Scott

RYDAL MOUNT, June 7th, 1830.

My dear Sir Walter,

Being upon a visit lately to Workington Hall, I there met with the elder brother by the father's side of Mr. Curwen, of that place, — Mr. Christian of Unerigg, in Cumberland, and deemster of the Isle of Man. He asked if I was acquainted with you. I replied that I had for thirty years, nearly, had that honour, and spoke of you with that warmth I am accustomed to feel upon such an occasion. He then told me that Professor Wilson, at his request, had some time ago undertaken to write to you upon a

point in which, innocently, you had been the cause of a good deal of uneasiness to him. You will guess, perhaps, that he alluded to the novel *Peveril of the Peak*. So it was. The conduct and character of his ancestor, Christian, had there been represented, he said, in colours which were utterly at variance with the truth, and threw unmerited discredit upon his family. He said that the great historic families of the country were open to the fictions of men of genius, the *facts* being known to all persons of education ; but in the case of a private family like his, it was very different; a false impression was easily made, and could not be obviated or corrected in the present instance, except by an acknowledgment from the author himself. . . . He was prepared, he said, to furnish you, if you wished it, with documents unquestionably proving that Christian was entitled to, and possessed, the gratitude of the *Isle-of-Manners* of his own and subsequent times, and that he was idolised in the country as a martyr, I suppose in a good cause. I replied that no one, I was sure, had a greater respect for ancestry than yourself, and that I could not think you would regard me as an unwarrantable intruder if I repeated his wish that some notice should be found in the following edition, by which the reader might be set right as to the real character of the person who came to so melancholy an end. . . .

My dear Scott, everlastingly yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DXVII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

June 15, 1830.

. . . Summer is at hand, and I look forward with much pleasure to the time when you are to fulfil your promise of bringing your sister here. . . . Therefore do not fail to come, and I will show you a thousand beauties, and we will talk over a hundred interesting things. . . .

Has Mr. Edgeworth gone to Italy? About the same time that brought your papers, there were lying in my desk a couple of pages of two several letters which I have begun to him, and in both of which I was interrupted, and so they never came to a conclusion. If you are in correspondence with him, pray, in mercy to me, tell him so; and if you come soon, I will write to him with a hope that you will add something to my letter, to make it acceptable. I know not whether you can sympathise with me when I say that it is a most painful effort of resolution to return to an unfinished letter, which may have been commenced with warmth and spirit. There seems a strange and disheartening gap between the two periods; and if the handwriting be bad, as mine always is, how ugly does the sheet look! . . .

DXVIII

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, June 22d, 1830.

My dear Sir,

I promised to write to you on my brother's return from Moresby; but alas! he brought his daughter home in a very weak state. . . .

As far as Dora is concerned, we should be glad to see you at any time ; but I cannot say when we shall have no company. At present our house is quite full ; one of the Misses Southey, and her brother, and a nephew of Mrs. Wordsworth are here ; and others expected when they are gone. But this fact ought not to prevent your directing your pony's head this way when you are disposed to take a day's holiday, if you can make up your mind to the disappointment of finding my brother not at home, or engaged.

We are much obliged for the copy of your verses on *The Hedgehog*. They are interesting, if but as a record of an incident connected with that harmless, oppressed creature. . . .

I remain, dear sir,

Your sincere friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

P.S. — Since writing the above my brother has met you at Fell Foot, and I find he has promised to inform you when we are without company. I am sorry to hear from him that your looks were not of the best.

DXIX

William Wordsworth to John Gardner

July 16, [1830.]

. . . Will you purchase for me spectacles with side-glasses? I do not wish them to be green, nor ordinary glass ; but there is a kind of a cold bluish tint that subdues the glary light. . . . My eyes, though so long hampered by inflammation, are not *aged;* so that, without being the least short-sighted, I can read the smallest print without spectacles, though I have for some time used the first size. . . .

DXX

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

Sept. 9th, 1830.

. . . We live in a strange sort of way in this country at the present season. Professor Wilson invited thirty persons to dine with him the other day, though he had neither provisions nor cook. I have no doubt, however, that all passed off well; for contributions of eatables came from one neighbouring house, to my knowledge, and good spirits, good humour, and good conversation would make up for many deficiencies. In another house, a cottage about a couple of miles from the professor's, were fifty guests, — how lodged I leave you to guess, — only we were told the overflow, after all possible cramming, was received in the offices, farmhouses, etc., adjoining. All this looks more like what one has been told of Irish hospitality than aught that the formal English are up to. . . .

DXXI

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

Lowther Castle, September 26, 1830.

. . . Did I tell you that Professor Wilson with his two sons and daughter have been, and probably still are, at Elleray? He heads the gaieties of the neighbourhood, and has presided as steward at two regattas. Do these employments come under your notions of action as opposed to contemplation? Why should they not? Whatever the high moralists may say, the political economists

will, I conclude, approve them as setting capital afloat; and giving an impulse to manufacture and handicrafts, not to speak of the improvement which may come thence to navigation and nautical science. . . .

There is another acquaintance of mine also recently gone — a person for whom I never had any love, but with whom I had for a short time a good deal of intimacy — I mean Hazlitt, whose death you may have seen announced in the papers. He was a man of extraordinary acuteness, but perverse as Lord Byron himself, whose *Life* by Galt I have been skimming since I came here. . . .

DXXII

William Wordsworth to Edwin Hill Handley

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
October 4th, 1830.

Dear Sir,

I lose no time in replying to your communication,[1] and will proceed to the point without ceremony or apology.

I protest, on your behalf, against the competence of the tribunal whose judgment you are content to abide by. A question of this moment can be decided only by and within the mind that proposes it. Allow me to say that you have reversed the order of judicial proceedings by appealing from the higher — higher assuredly *quoad hoc* — to the lower powers. What more then shall I say? That your interesting letter evinces extraordinary powers would be obvious to the dullest and most insensible. Indeed I may declare with sincerity, that great things may be expected from one capable of feeling in such a

[1] Mr. Handley had sent some of his verses to Wordsworth for his opinion. This letter is his reply. — Ed.

strain, and expressing himself with so much vigour and originality. With your verses upon Furness Abbey I am in sympathy when I look on the dark side of the subject, and they are well expressed, except for the phrase "supercilious damn" (if I read aright), which is not to my taste.

And now for the short piece that contains the "thoughts of your whole life." Having prepared you for the conclusion that neither my own opinion, nor that of any one else, is worth much as to deciding the point for which this document is given as evidence, I have no scruple in telling you honestly that I do not comprehend those lines; but, coming from one able to write the letter I have just received, I do not think the worse of them on that account. Were any one to show an acorn to a native of the Orcades who had never seen a shrub higher than his knee, and by way of giving him a notion or image of the oak should tell him that its "latitude of boughs" lies close folded in that "auburn nut," the Orcadian would stare, and feel that his imagination was somewhat unreasonably taxed. So is it with me in respect to this germ. I do not deny that the "forest's monarch with his army shade" may be lurking there in embryo, but neither can I undertake to affirm it. Therefore let your mind, which is surely of a high order, be its own oracle.

. . . The true standard of poetry is high as the soul of man has gone, or can go; of how far my own falls below that, no one can have such pathetic conviction as my poor self.

With high respect, I remain, dear sir,

Sincerely yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DXXIII

William Wordsworth to John Abraham Heraud

TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE,
November 23d, [1830.]

Dear Sir,

It gives me much concern that you should have occasion to write to me again, and the more so because the wish which you have done me the honour of expressing it is out of my power to gratify. . . . But to say the truth I read so little, and am so very much less addicted to writing — especially upon any formal subjects — that though I should not be without a strong wish to serve you, were I able to do so, I am conscious that I could not undertake the task you would put me to, with the least prospect of benefit to either of us. I am not a critic, and set little value upon the art. The preface which I wrote long ago to my own Poems I was persuaded to write by the urgent entreaties of a friend, and heartily regret I ever had anything to do with it; though I do not reckon the principles then advanced erroneous.

Your poem is vigorous, and that is enough for me. I think it in some places diffuse, in others somewhat rugged, from the originality of your mind. You feel strongly; trust to those feelings, and your poem will take its shape and proportions, as a tree does, from the vital principle that actuates it. I do not think that great poems can be cast in a mould. Homer's, the greatest of all, certainly was not. Trust, again I say, to yourself. . . .

Believe me, with sincere respect,
Your admirer,
WM. WORDSWORTH.

DXXIV

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

TRINITY LODGE, CAMBRIDGE,
November 26, 1830.

I reached this place nine days ago. . . . On the fifth of November I was a solitary equestrian entering the romantic little town of Ashford-in-the-Waters, on the edge of the wilds of Derbyshire, at the close of the day, when guns were beginning to be let off and squibs to be fired on every side, so that I thought it prudent to dismount and lead my horse through the place, and so on to Bakewell, two miles further. You must know how I happened to be riding through these wild regions. It was my wish that Dora should have the benefit of her pony while at Cambridge, and, very valiantly and economically, I determined, unused as I am to horsemanship, to ride the creature myself. I sent James with it to Lancaster ; there mounted, stopped a day at Manchester, a week at Coleorton, and so reached the end of my journey safe and sound, not, however, without encountering two days of tempestuous rain. Thirty-seven miles did I ride in one day through the worst of these storms, and what was my resource? Guess again. Writing verses to the memory of my departed friend Sir George Beaumont, whose house I had left the day before. While buffeting the other storm I composed a sonnet on the splendid domain of Chatsworth, which I had seen in the morning, as contrasted with the secluded habitations of the narrow dells in the Peak ; and as I passed through the tame and manufacture-disfigured country of Lancashire, I was reminded, by the faded leaves, of Spring,

and threw off a few stanzas of an ode to May. But too much of self and my own performances upon my steed, a descendant no doubt of Pegasus, though her owner and present rider knew nothing of it.

Now for a word about Professor Airy. I have seen him twice, but I did not communicate your message; it was at dinner and at an evening party, and I thought it best not to speak of it till I saw him, which I mean to do, upon a morning call. There is a great deal of intellectual activity within the walls of this College, and in the University at large; but conversation turns mainly upon the state of the country and the late change in the administration. The fires have extended to within eight miles of this place, from which I saw one of the worst, if not absolutely the worst, indicated by a redness in the sky, a few nights ago. . . . There is an interesting person in this University for a day or two, whom I have not yet seen, Kenelm Digby, author of *The Broadstone of Honour*, a book of chivalry, which I think was put into your hands at Rydal Mount. We have also a respectable show of blossom in poetry, — two brothers of the name of Tennyson, one in particular not a little promising. . . . My daughter has resumed her German labours, and is not easily drawn from what she takes to. . . . She owes a long letter to her brother in Germany, who, by-the-bye, tells us that he will not cease to look out for the book of Kant you wished for. . . .

DXXV

William Wordsworth to George Huntly Gordon

[1830.]

My dear Mr. Gordon,

Thanks for your hint about Rhenish. Strength from wine is good, from water still better. . . .

One is glad to see tyranny baffled and foolishness put to shame; but the French king, and his ministers, will be unfairly judged by all those who take not into consideration the difficulties of their position. It is not to be doubted that there has long existed a determination, and that plans have been laid, to destroy the government which the French received, as they felt, at the hands of the allies, and their pride could not bear. Moreover, the constitution, had it been their own choice, would by this time have lost favour in the eyes of the French, as not sufficiently democratic for the high notion *that* people entertain of their fitness to govern themselves; but, for my own part, I 'd rather fill the office of a parish beadle than sit on the throne where the Duke of Orleans has suffered himself to be placed.

The heat is gone; and, but that we have too much rain again, the country would be enchanting.

With a thousand thanks, I remain,

Ever yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

1831

DXXVI

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

Buxted Rectory, near Uckfield, Sussex,
24th January, 1831.

. . . In the *Quarterly Review* lately was an article, a very foolish one I think, upon the decay of science in England, and ascribing it to the want of patronage from the government — a poor compliment this to science! Her hill, it seems, in the opinion of the writer, cannot be ascended unless the pilgrim be "stuck o'er with titles and hung round with strings," and have his pockets laden with cash; besides, a man of science must be a minister of state or a privy councillor, or at least a public functionary of importance. Mr. Whewell, of Trinity College, Cambridge, has corrected the mis-statements of the reviewer in an article printed in the *British Critic* of January last, and vindicated his scientific countrymen. . . .

You are interested about Mr. Coleridge; I saw him several times lately, and had long conversations with him. It grieves me to say that his constitution seems much broken up. I have heard that he has been worse since I saw him. His mind has lost none of its vigour, but he is certainly in that state of bodily health that no one who knows him could feel justified in holding out the hope of even an introduction to him, as an inducement

for your visiting London. Much do I regret this, for you may pass your life without meeting a man of such commanding faculties. I hope that my criticisms have not deterred your sister from poetical composition. The world has indeed had enough of it lately, such as it is; but that is no reason why a sensibility like hers should not give vent to itself in verse.

DXXVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
February 23d, [1831.]

. . . We have had Dr. Arnold[2] and his family staying his Christmas vacation at the foot of our hill. They enjoyed themselves mightily, the weather having been delightful. The Lords being threatened with destruction, I say nothing of politics.

Ever faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

DXXVIII

William Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL,
April 15, [1831.]

My dear Sir George,

The papers inform me that a second son has made his appearance at Coleorton Hall. We all congratulate you and Lady Beaumont sincerely upon this happy event.

[1] Sir Henry Taylor (1800–1886), author of *Philip Van Artevelde*, etc. — Ed.

[2] Of Rugby. — Ed.

May the newly-arrived, and his brother, live to be a blessing to their parents.

I congratulate you also upon having got through your troublesome office of sheriff; as it is so much more agreeable to look back upon such an employment, however honourable, than to have it in prospect.

My dear sister, though obliged to keep to the habits and restraints of an invalid for prudence' sake, is, I am happy to say, in good health. She and Mrs. Wordsworth join with me in best wishes and regards to yourself and Lady Beaumont, as would my son and daughter have done; but they are now together at his abode, I cannot say his parsonage (for the living has none), at Moresby, near Whitehaven.

I remain, my dear Sir George,
Faithfully yours,
WM. WORDSWORTH.

DXXIX

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

9th June, 1831.

. . . As to improving the selection in another edition, I am very sceptical about that. You would find no two persons agreeing upon what was best; and, upon the whole, tell Mr. H. that I think he has succeeded fully as well, if not better, than most other persons would have done. . . . Mr. Leigh Hunt is a coxcomb, was a coxcomb, and ever will be a coxcomb.

I am, faithfully yours,
W. WORDSWORTH.

DXXX

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, June 13, 1831.

. . . I saw little or nothing of Cambridge on my return, which was upon the eve of the election; but I found that the mathematicians of Trinity — Peacock, Airy, Whewell — were taking what I thought the wrong side; so was that able man, the geological professor, Sedgwick. But "what matter?" was said to me by a lady; "these people know nothing but about stars and stones"; which is true, I own, of some of them. . . .

I have scarcely written a hundred verses during the last twelve months; a sonnet, however, composed the day before yesterday, shall be transcribed upon this sheet, by way of making *my* part of it better worth postage. It was written at the request of the painter, Haydon, and to benefit him, i.e. as he thought; but it is no more than my sincere opinion of his excellent picture. . . .

A selection from my poems has just been edited by Dr. Hine, for the benefit chiefly of schools and young persons. . . . Fifteen hundred copies have been struck off. . . .

DXXXI

Dorothy Wordsworth to the Rowan Hamiltons

[RYDAL, 1831.]

. . . As you, my dear friends, Mr. and Miss Hamilton, may [illegible] overed by the slight improvement in legibility [illegible] manship, other hands have been employed

Henry T. Ed. Rugby.

to finish this letter, which has been on the stocks half as long as a man-of-war! . . .

This very moment a letter arrives — very complimentary — from the Master of St. John's College, Cambridge (the place of my brother William's education), requesting him to sit for his portrait to some eminent artist, as he expresses it, "to be placed in the old house among their worthies." He writes in his own name, and that of several of the Fellows. Of course my brother consents; but the difficulty is to fix on an artist.[1] There never yet has been a good portrait of my brother. The sketch by Haydon, as you may remember, is a fine drawing; but what a likeness! All that there is of likeness makes it to me the more disagreeable.

DXXXII

William Wordsworth to Benjamin Robert Haydon

[RYDAL] June, 1831.

My dear Haydon,

I send you the sonnet,[2] and let me have your "Kingdom" for it. What I send you is not warm, but piping-hot from the brain, whence it came in the wood adjoining my garden not ten minutes ago, and was scarcely more than twice as long in coming. You know how much I admired your picture, both for the execution and the conception. The latter is first-rate, and I could dwell upon it for a long time in prose, without disparagement to the former, which I admired also, having to it no objection

[1] It was painted by H. W. Pickersgill. — Ed.

[2] The sonnet entitled *To B. R. Haydon, on seeing his picture of Napoleon Bonaparte on the Island of St. Helena.* — Ed.

but the regimentals. They are too spruce, and remind one of the parade, which the wearer seems to have just left.

One of the best caricatures I have lately seen is that of Brougham, a single figure upon one knee, stretching out his arms by the sea-shore towards the rising sun (William the Fourth), which, as in duty bound, he is worshipping. Do not think your excellent picture degraded, if I remark that the force of the same principle, simplicity, is seen in the burlesque composition, as in your work, — with infinitely less effect, no doubt, from the inferiority of style and subject; yet still it is pleasing to note the undercurrents of affinity in opposite styles of art.

I think of Napoleon pretty much as you do, but with more dislike, probably because my thoughts have turned less upon the flesh-and-blood man than yours; and therefore have been more at liberty to dwell, with unqualified scorn, upon his various liberticide projects, and the miserable selfishness of his spirit. Few men of any time have been at the head of greater events, yet they seem to have had no power to create in him the least tendency towards magnanimity. How, then, with this impression, can I help despising him? So much for the idol of thousands. As to the Reformers, the folly of the ministerial leaders is only to be surpassed by the wickedness of those who will speedily supplant them. God of Mercy, have mercy upon poor England! To think of this glorious country lackeying the heels of France in religion, that is *no* religion, in morals, government, and social order! It cannot come to good, at least for the present generation. They have begun it in shame, and it will lead them to misery. God bless you.

Yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

P.S. — You are at liberty to print the sonnet, with my name, when and where you think proper. If it does you the least service, the end for which it is written will be answered. Call at Moxon's, Bond Street, and let him give you from me, for your children, a copy of the *Selections* he has just published from my poems.

DXXXIII

William Wordsworth to Sir Walter Scott

RYDAL MOUNT (sometimes called Idle Mount, and in your address of June last misnamed Mount Rydal), 20th July, 1831.

. . . I feel truly obliged, dear Sir Walter, by your attention to Mr. Christian's wishes. He is perfectly satisfied. When I mentioned the matter to you I had not the least suspicion of an event being in progress, which has already connected me with the family of Christian by a tie much stronger than that of common acquaintance. My eldest son has been accepted by Miss Curwen, with the entire approbation of her parents, as her future husband, and they are soon to be married. She is now upon a visit to us, and we are quite charmed with her amiable disposition, her gentleness, her delicacy, her modesty, her sound sense, and right notions; so that my son has a prospect before him as bright as man can wish for. . . .

DXXXIV

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

RYDAL, July 21, 1831.

My dear Sir,

. . . I have an aversion little less than insurmountable to having anything to do with periodicals. . . . If I could bring myself, out of personal kindness for any editor or proprietor of a periodical, to contribute, it would be to the channel of Alaric Watts,[1] who has a sort of claim upon me for literary civilities and intended services some time ago. . . .

And now may I take the liberty of expressing my regret that you should have been tempted into this experiment at all? . . . It strikes me that there is something like attempting to take the public by storm in putting forth your personal friends in the way you propose to do. The public is apt to revolt at any such step. . . .

DXXXV

Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson

Concluded on Friday, the 9th of September, [1831.]

My dear Friend,

. . . There is just come out a portrait of my brother, for which he sat when last in London. It is a lithograph of a chalk drawing by Wilkins, and may be had in London. I think it a strong likeness, and so does every one.

[1] He refers to *The Englishman's Magazine*, which began in April and ended in October, 1831. — Ed.

Of course, to his own family something is wanting; nevertheless I value it much as a likeness of him in company, and something of that restraint with cheerfulness, which is natural to him in mixed societies. There is nothing of the poet. . . .

Saturday. This letter was interrupted three weeks ago, or thereabouts; and afterwards being unexpectedly called away to Belle Isle, while John and Isabella were there, I left it unfinished. I stayed there ten days. It is a splendid place for a visit such as mine; but compared with Rydal Mount dull, and to the feelings confining, though persons who live there persuade themselves there is no more trouble in being ferried over to the shore than in continuing uninterruptedly to walk on.

But what I like least in an island as a residence is the being separated from men, cattle, cottages, and the goings-on of rural life. John and Isabella are on a tour in North Wales, and my brother, Dora, and Charles Wordsworth hope to set off next week on a few days visit to Sir W. Scott; and, if weather allow, a short tour — Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Loch Lomond, Inverary, Loch Awe, Loch Etive, and the isle of Mull. We have friends at that island. Stamp-office business prevented their setting off some days ago. . . . Dora is to drive her father in a little carriage of our own, with a very steady horse. Charles will travel by coach, and on foot, or as he can. He is a fine, cheerful fellow, and rejoices in the hope of this little tour, being very fond of both his uncle and cousin, and glad of the opportunity of seeing a person of so much importance as Sir Walter. Poor man! his health is shattered by a recurrence of slight paralytic strokes, but his mind is active as ever. He would write eight hours in the day if allowed by the physicians, but

it is the worst thing he can do; and most likely it is rather to divert him from study, than for benefits expected from the climate, that he has been advised to winter in Italy. He has fixed on leaving Abbotsford at the end of this month to proceed to Naples. The young William is still here; but on the 20th of next month is to begin residence at Carlisle as sub-distributor there — a good putting on (for it is about £180 per annum) till something better fall out, or as long as things are allowed to remain as they are. But, to tell you the truth, so many changes are going on, I consider nothing as stable; and do expect that the sovereign people to whom our rulers bow so obsequiously will not long endure the stamp office, and its distributors, or the national debt, or anything else that now is.

In October we expect Mr. Jones, the companion of my brother forty years ago over the Alps. He looks back to that journey as the golden and sunny spot in his life. It would delight you to hear the pair talk of their adventures. My brother, active, lively, and almost as strong as ever on a mountain top; Jones, fat and roundabout and rosy, and puffing and panting while he climbs the little hill from the road to our house. Never was there a more remarkable contrast; yet time seems to have strengthened the attachment of the native of Cambrian mountains to his Cumbrian friend. We also expect Mr. Quillinan in October. Whether he will leave his daughter Rotha (his youngest born) with us for the winter, or take her to school, I know not. Jemima is at school near Paris, and as Dora does not like to part with her godchild, perhaps it may be settled that she remain here till spring. She is an interesting and very clever child, the image of her father. We never saw the Tillbrooks but at church, and

did not exchange a word with either of them. It is of no use to enter on a painful history; enough to say that both Tillbrook and his wife so misrepresented the truth in regard to Dora's refusal of Mr. Ayling's offer of marriage, that we could have no satisfaction in holding intercourse with them, and therefore we never entered their door. For your own private ear I will just say that Mrs. T. is what the world calls a fascinating woman, and that there is an appearance of simplicity and frankness about her which won Dora's heart, and we all liked her much. During the intercourse which continued a little while between Dora and her, after D.'s refusal, we had cause to think her a person whom we should not desire to be closely connected with. . . . If you would come next summer for one month, two, or three — or as long as you liked — Mrs. Luff would consent cheerfully to let you keep house, and would be your guest. Now, is it not possible that the thing might be? Surely it is. But I feel inclined neither to talk, think, nor plan about such a scheme. If circumstances favour, no need of planning. You would have only to resolve and propose, and the thing is done. At sixty years of age, scheming is not the amusement one is inclined to resort to. The certainty of death, its near approach, and the sudden changes continually happening among those who were young when we were, absolutely check in me all disposition to form plans. . . . My brother was lately at Lowther, and called with Lord Lonsdale on Thomas Wilkinson. He was cheerful, though quite blind. . . .

DXXXVI

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 9th.
[Postmark, Sept. 13, 1831.]

My dear Mr. Kenyon,

Your letter, which reached me at the breakfast table, as my letters generally do, was truly acceptable to myself and to all of us. . . . At Nottingham that poetry, upon which you are so good-naturedly copious, stood me in good stead. I had not an acquaintance in that large town, but I introduced myself and told our distresses to a brother and sister of the lyre, William and Mary Howitt, and they were as kind to us as all poets and poetesses ought to be to each other; offering their house as a place of retreat from the noise and tumult of the elections which were to begin the next day. In twelve days Mary and Dora followed me home. And here we are with William, who is to be fixed at Carlisle as my sub-distributor in about a month from this time. John and his wife have been with us; and Dora and I are going to see Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford, before his departure for Naples, where he intends to winter for the benefit of his health. Had I not feared that you might have left St. Leonards, I would have kept this letter, with the hope of making it more interesting to you and Mrs. K. by some account of that great man, and the many things and objects he has about him, which you would have been pleased to hear of, and which he is going to leave so soon upon what may prove a melancholy errand.

The summer that is over has been with us, as well as with you, a brilliant one for sunshine and fair and calm

weather; brilliant also for its unexampled gaiety in regattas, balls, dejeuners, picnics by the lakeside, on the islands, and on the mountain tops, fireworks by night, dancing on the greensward by day; in short a fever of pleasure from morn to dewy eve, from dewy eve till break of day. Our youths and maidens, like Chaucer's squire, "have slept no more than doth the nightingale," and our old men have looked as bright as Tithonus when his withered cheek reflected the blushes of Aurora, upon her first declaration of her passion for him. In the room where I am now dictating, we had, three days ago, a dance — forty beaux and belles, besides matrons, ancient spinsters, and greybeards — and to-morrow in this same room we are to muster for a venison feast. Why are you not here, either to enjoy or to philosophise upon this dissipation? Our party to-morrow is not so large but that we could find room for you and Mrs. Kenyon. The disturbed state of the Continent is no doubt the reason why, in spite of the Reform Bill, such multitudes of pleasure hunters have found their way this summer to the Lakes.

After so much levity, Mary shall transcribe for you a serious stanza or two, intended for an inscription in a part of the grounds of Rydal Mount with which you are not acquainted, a field adjoining our garden which I purchased two or three years ago. Under the shade of some pollard oaks, and on a green terrace in that field, we have lived no small part of the long bright days of the summer gone by; and in a hazel nook of this favourite piece of ground is a stone, for which I wrote one day the following serious inscription. You will forgive its egotism.

In these fair vales hath many a tree
At Wordsworth's suit been spared,

And from the builder's hand this stone,
For some rude beauty of its own,
Was rescued by the bard;
Long may it rest in peace! and here
Perchance the tender-hearted
Will heave a gentle sigh for him
As one of the departed.

. . . How sorry I am that Mr. Bailey should have gone as far as Ceylon ignorant of the fact that I never have received his book, nor before the receipt of your letter was aware of the intended favour! How came your brother to go from Manchester into Scotland without taking us by the way? but perhaps he steamed it from Liverpool. Tillbrook has offered his house and furniture for sale by private treaty, the price two thousand guineas; *entre nous*, eight hundred more than its worth, except for fancy. Adieu; every one here — to wit, self and spouse, son and daughter, sister and sister in something better than law — joins in kindest regards to you and Mrs. Kenyon, and to your brother when you write to him. Farewell again.

Very affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

We shall always, not merely "now and then," be glad to hear from you. You asked how I had "things from London." Pamphlets, etc., sent to J. Richardson, 91 Royal Exchange, are forwarded if directed to me under cover to Hudson & Nicholson, Booksellers, Kendal.

DXXXVII

William Wordsworth to Sir Walter Scott

CARLISLE, Sept. 16, [1831.]

My dear Sir Walter,

"There's a man wi' a veil, and a lass drivin'," exclaimed a little urchin, as we entered merry Carlisle a couple of hours ago, on our way to Abbotsford. . . .

A nephew of mine,[1] a student of Christchurch — and I may add, a distinguished one — to whom I could not but allow the pleasure of accompanying us, has taken the Newcastle road into Scotland, hoping to join me at Abbotsford. If he should arrive before us, let him be no restraint upon you whatever. Let him loose in your library, or on the Tweed with his fishing-rod, or in the stubble with his gun (he is but a novice of a shot, by-the-bye), and he will be no trouble to any part of your family.

I am, very affectionately yours,

W. W.

DXXXVIII

Sarah Hutchinson to Edward Quillinan[2]

[Oct. 1st, 1831.]

My dear Friend,

The enclosed has been long sticking in the china quart upon the mantelpiece waiting for an opportunity to be forwarded, as we did not think it worth double postage, and now when the opportunity has arrived we know not

[1] Charles, afterwards Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews. — Ed.

[2] No date or postmark, Oct. 1, 1831. — Ed.

how to direct to you, so shall enclose it to Eliza (to whom a letter yesterday was scrawled in much haste), who is possibly still in B. street. This is the first day of October, and we hope you are beginning to think of your journey hitherward, though it is but fair to tell you that our Master and Dora will not be at home till the 23d or 24th. Charles Wordsworth, who has been with them at Abbotsford, is on his return; we expect him this evening. Their journey seems to have been very pleasant so far — though they were just in time to see Sir Walter, as he set out for Naples last Friday week, and they did not reach Abbotsford till the preceding Monday; but they spent three days there most agreeably, and found their host better than they had hoped, or the newspapers for some time have allowed him to be. To-day they were to reach Bonaw upon Loch Etive, and I suppose on Monday they will go to Mull, where they are to remain a few days with Col. and Mrs. Campbell, our old Allan Bank neighbours. Mr. Wordsworth's eyes have gradually improved during the journey and are now nearly quite well. D.[1] says nothing of her own health, but as she appears to enjoy herself so much we trust it is good, and if the weather continues tolerable, I doubt not they will both return in good plight; but here we have at present true Westmoreland weather — though not entirely wet, yet very close, hot, and unwholesome. Notwithstanding, we are all well, and your little darling has been as good as possible ever since she came hither. So I suppose her native air is salutary. She is also as good as possible and continues to be the delight of the whole household.

If you are still at Bath this letter may not reach you — as probably you will come hither without returning to

[1] Dora Wordsworth. — Ed.

town, in which case I shall be very angry with you if you do not give our friends at Brinsop[1] a call as it will be in your most direct road. Ro.[2] has a very pretty letter from Mima,[3] who seems to be very happy at her new school, though she wishes to see Rotha and Eliza much. I shall not write you any news or gossip, because I do not expect you will receive this letter, but if you do you must wait patiently till we meet.

My sister and Miss Wordsworth join in kindest regards, and believe me,

Ever your true friend,

S. H.

DXXXIX

John Wordsworth[4] *to Dora Wordsworth*

Buxted, October 17th, 1831.

My dear Dora,

If you ever think of me at all, and I should be sorry to believe you did not, you will be not a little surprised at receiving a letter from me dated Buxted, at a time when you imagine me perhaps almost arrived at the antipodes. I will not trouble you at present with the reasons which have induced me to postpone my visit to the other hemisphere; suffice it to say that they might be divided and subdivided into almost as many sections as a sermon of the old divines, or as the conclusion of one which my father preached yesterday evening and which might fairly

[1] Brinsop Court in Herefordshire. — Ed.

[2] Rotha Quillinan. — Ed.

[3] Jemima Quillinan, her sister.'— Ed.

[4] The son of the Master of Trinity, and cousin of his correspondent. — Ed.

be compared to a cat of nine tails. In writing this letter I have another object. For the last three months I have been settled at Buxted, and have scarcely exchanged one word with any rational creature except my father and his curate, and I have lately been working hard at some papers which are to appear in the next number of the *Museum Criticum*, of which Mr. Rose is the editor. I have just now completed my task, and after taking such a "desperate draught" of Greek and Latin in the contemplative seclusion of Buxted, I begin to long for an escape from books and solitude.

I have promised to spend a few days at Birmingham, and I hope to be there on Thursday next. If you can either give or procure me a lodging in your neighbourhood, I should be very glad to continue my journey northward; but if it is in the slightest degree inconvenient to my uncle to receive me, I hope you will tell me so without any reserve, and I shall then indulge my vagabond propensities in some other direction. Will you let me know whether I may proceed northward or no by a few lines directed to Bingley? My father is remarkably well. Our life here as you may guess has been somewhat monotonous, and we should have been in danger of stagnation if we had not found plenty of materials for conversation in the madness and wickedness of the Ministry, who have plunged the country and themselves into an abyss of difficulty and danger, from which it can scarcely be extricated by human means. The accounts given in the newspapers of the riots and disturbances in London are very much exaggerated. This is one of the artifices employed to propagate tumult, by that press which has strained every sinew to goad the people into rebellion. There can be no doubt that a great reaction has taken

place in the popular opinion in favour of reform, but we can derive but little hope from this while we have a Ministry obstinately determined to stake everything upon the success of this measure, and a House of Commons dumb in support of reform, and deaf and blind to everything against it. The post is just going out, and I have only time to add our united love to all at Rydal. . . .

Believe me, my dear Dora,

Ever your very affectionate cousin,

JOHN WORDSWORTH.

DXL

Dorothy Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, October 20th, 1831.

My dear Sir,

My nephew, being particularly engaged with office business during Mr. Carter's absence (who is keeping holiday at Liverpool), has desired me to return you his best thanks for your letter, and for all the pains you have taken to procure a horse.

As perhaps you may have heard, William and his father set off a few days ago to look after one or more of the horses you had mentioned; and fortunately fell in with the grey, and its owner. In some respects they were much pleased with it; but the man asked £30 for it, which they thought too much, and besides, he was not ready to warrant its soundness, but only said, he "would pass it." These considerations induced my brother, with his son, to go to Crook yesterday, and there they actually made a bargain, not for the Crook Hall grey,

but for a bay horse, which they hope will answer their purpose.

It is an admirable walker, but unused to trotting, having only been put to carting and ploughing. We expect the horse to-day, and as soon as it has had a fair trial it is to be sent to Moresby to bring home Mrs. Wordsworth; and soon after her return it may possibly have the honour of conveying the poet and his daughter to Abbotsford, to visit Sir Walter Scott! This visit has long been promised, but the late accounts of Sir Walter's health having been very bad, we were fearful that the visit might never be accomplished. I am happy, however, to tell you that a friend of ours who has just been on a visit at Abbotsford informs us that Sir Walter is much better at present, and quite able to enjoy the society of friends. This information has determined my brother to think seriously of the journey; and if Sir Walter continues as well as he is at present, it will probably be accomplished during the autumn. . . .

My brother and William would have been very glad to call on you yesterday, but the additional three miles would have made the ride too long for him. As it was, he was a good deal fatigued, not being so clever on horseback as on foot. . . .

I am, dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

DXLI

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

[Postmark, Oct. 22, 1831.]

On my return from an excursion in Scotland two days ago I found the fourteenth volume of Bacon,[1] together with your note of the 9th of August, left here by Mr. Romilly. On the question of the punishment by death you have written with much ability. For my own part, I am decidedly of opinion that, in the case of forgery, both humanity and policy require that an experiment should be made to ascertain whether it cannot be dispensed with.

I am glad that you are proceeding with the life of Bacon. You say that he was sacrificed to Buckingham. Have you read a letter of Buckingham's to him in which he charges him with the intention of sacrificing him (Buckingham) as he had betrayed all his patrons and friends in succession? Buckingham enumerates the cases. It has always appeared to me that much of the odium attached to Lord Bacon's name on account of corrupt practices arose out of ignorance respecting the spirit of those times, and the way in which things were carried on. . . . Travelling agrees with me wonderfully. I am as much Peter Bell as ever, and since my eyelids have been so liable to inflammation, after much reading especially, I find nothing so feeding to my mind as change of scene, and rambling about; and my labours, such as they are, can be carried on better in the fields and on the roads, than anywhere else. . . .

[1] Montagu was then editing Bacon's works. — Ed.

DXLII

Dora Wordsworth to Miss Hamilton (Rowan Hamilton's Sister)

RYDAL MOUNT, October 26, 1831.

My dear Miss Hamilton,

. . . Father and I were among the Highlands when your brother's last letter arrived — a late season for touring, you may think, and so it was; but the additional beauty given to the colouring of the woods by October's workmanship,[1] and to the mountains by her mists and vapours and rainbows, reflected again and again both in the waters and on the clouds, more than compensated for shortened days and broken weather. Father has called Scotland the "Land of Rainbows." I, who had never been in Scotland, was more delighted than words can tell; but it may be I am not an unprejudiced judge. I could not look at Inversnaid,

> The lake, the bay, the waterfall,[2]

nor at that

> Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen spot
> In Nysa's isle, the embellished Grot,[3]

with common eyes. Almost every spot of peculiar interest was interesting to me for my father's sake, more so

[1] Compare the line in the sonnet on *The Trossachs* —

> October's workmanship to rival May. — Ed.

[2] See *To a Highland Girl*, l. 77, *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. II, p. 392. — Ed.

[3] See *The Brownies' Cell*, stanza x, *Poetical Works*, Eversley edition, Vol. VI, p. 20. — Ed.

even than for its own. And Yarrow too, and "Newark's towers"; and here I was introduced, not only by my father, but by Sir Walter Scott; so one cannot imagine a place seen under happier circumstances. Our main object in leaving home was a visit to Abbotsford, which had long been promised; and Sir Walter's state of health, and his great wish to see my father, determined him to undertake the journey, late in the year as it was, and bad as were his eyes. When so near Edinburgh, it was a pity to return without a peep at that fine city; and then, finding travelling agreed with his eyes, we crept on into the Highlands, and as far as Mull. Staffa was the height of my travelling ambition, but that we could not accomplish; the steamboat had ceased to ply, and it was much too late to trust our precious lives to an open boat. . . . I will only add a sonnet which was written a day or two after we left Abbotsford, which was only the day before Sir Walter was to quit it for Italy, and for his health's sake:

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain, etc.

. . . All are well, father, mother, and aunts, the first-mentioned still prophesying ruin and desolation to this hitherto flourishing spot of earth. The evil which he foresees from this dreadful Reform Bill quite weighs his spirit down. Our tour was a happy event, for it gave fresh impulse to his muse, and he has been able to drown his political thoughts and feelings for a time in his poetical ones. We did not see a newspaper for five weeks, and only heard by accident of the bill being kicked out — were we not to be envied? But I have got to *we*, and Scotland again! . . .

. . . We have at present with us a very dear and old friend of my father's, Mr. Jones, his travelling companion in the pedestrian tour over the Alps. He lives in Wales, of which country, as his name tells, he is a native. . . .

Your affectionate friend,

DORA WORDSWORTH.

DXLIII

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

RYDAL MOUNT, October 27, 1831.

. . . In a former letter you mention Francis Edgeworth. . . . He was struck with my mention of a sound in the eagle's notes much and frequently resembling the yelping and barking of a dog, and quoted a passage in Æschylus where the eagle is called the flying hound of the air; and he suggested that Æschylus might not only allude by that term to his being a bird of chase or prey, but also to this barking voice, which I do not recollect ever hearing noticed. The other day I was forcibly reminded of the circumstances under which the pair of eagles were seen that I described in my letter to Mr. Edgeworth, his brother. (It was at the promontory of Fair-head, on the coast of Antrim, and no spectacle could be grander.) At Dunolly Castle — a ruin situated at the tip of one of the horns of the bay of Oban — I saw, the other day, one of these noble creatures cooped up among the ruins, and was incited to give vent to my feelings, as you shall now see:

Dishonoured rock and ruin! that by law, etc.[1]

[1] See *Poetical Works*, Vol. VII, p. 292. — Ed.

You will naturally wish to hear something of Sir Walter Scott, and particularly of his health. I found him a good deal changed within the last three or four years, in consequence of some shocks of the apoplectic kind, but his friends say that he is very much better; and the last accounts, up to the time of his going on board, were still more favourable. I trust the world and his friends may be hopeful, with good reason, that the life and faculties of this man — who has during the last six-and-twenty years diffused more innocent pleasure than ever fell to the lot of any human being to do in his own lifetime — may be spared. Voltaire, no doubt, was full as extensively known, and filled a larger space probably in the eye of Europe; for he was a great theatrical writer (which Scott has not proved himself to be) and miscellaneous to such a degree that there was something for all classes of readers; but the pleasure afforded by his writings — with the exception of some of his tragedies and minor poems — was not pure, and in this Scott is greatly his superior. As Dora has told your sister, Sir W. was our guide to Yarrow; the pleasure of that day induced me to add a third to the two poems upon Yarrow — *Yarrow Revisited.* It is in the same measure, and as much in the same spirit as matter of fact would allow. You are artist enough to know that it is next to impossible entirely to harmonise things that rest upon their poetic credibility, and are idealised by distance of time and space, with those that rest upon the evidence of the hour, and have about them the thorny points of actual life. . . .

DXLIV

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 9.

My dear Lady Frederick,

. . . You are quite right, dear Lady Frederick, in congratulating me on my late ramble in Scotland. For more than a month I scarcely saw a newspaper, or heard of their contents. During this time we almost forgot, my daughter and I, the deplorable state of the country. My spirits rallied, and, with exercise — for I often walked scarcely less than twenty miles a day — and the employment of composing verses amid the most beautiful scenery, and at a season when the foliage was most rich and varied, the time fled away delightfully; and when we came back into the world again, it seemed as if I had waked from a dream that was never to return. We travelled in an open carriage with one horse, driven by Dora; and while we were in the Highlands I walked most of the way by the side of the carriage, which left us leisure to observe the beautiful appearances. The rainbows and coloured mists floating about the hills were more like enchantment than anything I ever saw, even among the Alps. There was in particular, the day we made the tour of Loch Lomond in the steamboat, a fragment of a rainbow, so broad, so splendid, so glorious with its reflection in the calm water, that it astonished every one on board; a party of foreigners especially, who could not refrain from expressing their pleasure in a more lively manner than we are accustomed to.

My object in going to Scotland so late in the season was to see Sir Walter Scott before his departure. We

[1] Lord Lonsdale's daughter. — Ed.

stayed with him three days, and he quitted Abbotsford the day after we left it. His health has undoubtedly been much shattered by successive shocks of apoplexy, but his friends say he is so much recovered that they entertain good hopes of his life and faculties being spared. Mr. Lockhart tells me that he derived benefit by a change of treatment made by his London physicians, and that he embarked in good spirits.

As to public affairs, I have no hope but in the goodness of Almighty God. The Lords have recovered much of the credit they had lost by their conduct in the Roman Catholic question. As an Englishman I am deeply grateful for the stand which they have made, but I cannot help fearing that they may be seduced or intimidated. Our misfortune is, that those who disapprove of this monstrous bill give way to a belief that nothing can prevent its being passed; and therefore they submit.

As to the cholera, I cannot say it appals me much; it may be in the order of Providence to employ this scourge for bringing the nation to its senses: though history tells us in the case of the plague at Athens, and other like visitations, that men are never so wicked and depraved as when afflictions of that kind are upon them. So that, after all, one must come round to our only support, submission to the will of God, and faith in the ultimate goodness of his dispensations.

I am sorry you did not mention your son, in whose health and welfare and progress in his studies I am always much interested. Pray remember me kindly to Lady Caroline. All here join with me in presenting their kindest remembrances to yourself; and believe me, dear Lady Frederick,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DXLV

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

November 22, 1831.

. . . Again and again I must repeat, that the composition of verse is infinitely more of an art than men are prepared to believe, and absolute success in it depends upon innumerable *minutiæ*, which it grieves me you should stoop to acquire a knowledge of. Milton says of pouring "easy his unpremeditated verse." It would be harsh, untrue, and odious to say there is anything like cant in this; but it is not *true* to the letter, and tends to mislead. I could point out to you five hundred passages in Milton, upon which labour has been bestowed, and twice five hundred more to which additional labour would have been serviceable; not that I regret the absence of such labour, because no poem contains more proof of skill acquired by practice.[1] . . .

Coleridge's most intimate friend is Mr. Green, a man of science, and a distinguished surgeon. If you could procure an introduction to him, he would let you know the state of Coleridge's health; and to Mr. Green, whom I once saw, you might use my name with a view to further your wish, if at all needful.

Shakespeare's sonnets (excuse this leap) are not upon the Italian model, which Milton's are; they are merely quatrains with a couplet tacked to the end; and if they depended much on the versification, they would unavoidably be heavy.

[1] Than *Paradise Lost*, he doubtless means. — Ed.

One word upon Reform in Parliament, a subject to which somewhat reluctantly you allude. You are a reformer! Are you an approver of the bill as rejected by the Lords? or, to use Lord Grey's words, anything "as efficient"? (he means — if he means anything — efficient for producing change). Then I earnestly exhort you to devote hours and hours to the study of human nature, in books, in life, and in your own mind; and beg and pray that you will mix with society, not in Ireland and Scotland only, but in England. There is a fount of destiny, which if once poisoned, away goes all hope of quiet progress in well-doing. The Constitution of England — which seems about to be destroyed — offers to my mind the sublimest contemplation which the history of Society and Government have ever presented to it, — and for this cause especially, that its principles have the character of preconceived ideas, archetypes of the pure intellect, while they are in fact the results of a humble-minded experience. Think about this. Apply it to what we are threatened with, and farewell. . . .

DXLVI

Dorothy Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, Friday, December 1st, 1831.

My dear Friend,

Had a rumour of your arrival in England reached us before your letter of yesterday's post you would ere this have received a welcoming from me, in the name of each member of this family; and further would have been reminded of your promise to come to Rydal as soon as

possible after again setting foot on English ground. When Dora heard of your return, and of my intention to write, she exclaimed — after a charge that I would recall to your mind your written promise — "He must come and spend Christmas with us, I wish he would!" Thus you see, notwithstanding your petty jarrings, Dora was always, and now is, a loving friend of yours. I am sure I need not add that if you can come at the time mentioned, so much the more agreeable to us all, for it is fast approaching; but that whenever it suits you (for you may have Christmas engagements with your own family) to travel so far northward we shall be rejoiced to see you; and whatever other visitors we may chance to have, we shall always be able to find a corner for you. At present, though our nephew John, of Cambridge, is here, we have a vacant spare room which will most likely, if you do not come to occupy it, remain so during most part of the winter. We are thankful that you are returned with health unimpaired, I may say indeed, amended; for you were not perfectly well when you left England.

As to your being older, if you mean feebler in mind, my brother says, "No such thing; his judgment has only now attained autumnal ripeness." Indeed, my dear friend, I wonder not at your alarms, or those of any good man — whatever may have been the course of his politics from youth to middle age and onward to the decline of life, — but I will not enter on this sad, and perplexing, subject. I find it much more easy to look with calmness on the approach of pestilence, or any affliction which it may please God to cast upon us without the intervention of man, than on the dreadful results of sudden and rash changes, whether arising from ambition, or ignorance, or brute force; but I am getting into

the subject without intending it, so will conclude with a prayer that God may enlighten the heads and hearts of our men of power, whether Whigs or Tories, and that the madness of the deluded people may settle. This last effect can only be produced, I fear, by exactly and severely executing the law,[1] seeking out and punishing the guilty, and letting all persons see that we do not willingly oppress the poor. One blessing seems already to be coming upon, and through, the alarm of the cholera.

Every rich man is now obliged to look into the miserable by-lanes and corners inhabited by the poor, and many crying abuses are (even in our little town of Ambleside) about to be remedied. But to return to pleasant Rydal Mount, still cheerful and peaceful. If it were not for the newspapers, we should know nothing of the turbulence of our great towns and cities. Yet my poor brother is often heart-sick and almost desponding, and no wonder; for unto the point at which we are arrived, he has been a true prophet as to the course of events, dating from the "great days of July" and the appearance of the reform bill, "the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." It remains for us now to hope that Parliament may meet in a different temper from that in which it parted, and that the late dreadful events may make each man seek only to promote the peace and prosperity of the country. You will say that my brother looks older. He is certainly thinner, and has lost some of his teeth, but his bodily activity is not at all diminished; and if it were not for public affairs his spirits would be as cheerful as ever. He and Dora visited Sir Walter Scott just before his

[1] Of late the greatest criminals have gone on undiscovered, or, if discovered, unpunished. — D. W.

departure, and made a little tour in the western Highlands; and — such was his leaning to old pedestrian habits — he often walked from fifteen to twenty miles in a day, following or by the side of the little carriage of which his daughter was the charioteer. They both very much enjoyed the tour, and my brother actually brought home a set of poems, the product of that journey. . . . You will be glad to hear also that my niece is grown strong and healthy.

Her brother John is happily married and lives at Moresby, near Whitehaven, being rector of Moresby. His wife is one of the best of good creatures. William returned from Germany much improved, and with strong likings to that country. He is now living at Carlisle very contented, if our financiers will suffer him so to remain, on an income of £150 per annum, as his father's subdistributor. Miss Hutchinson is well, and begs her kind regards to you. It reconciled me in some degree to my misdoings to hear that some of your friends' letters had miscarried during your wanderings. The truth is, that in spite of wishes and intentions, and of gratitude and pleasure for your most interesting letter from Rome, I did not once write. . . . We were glad you had seen Charles and Mary Lamb and Mrs. Clarkson, and thankful for as good a report of them as we had a right to expect. My brother, Dr. Wordsworth, is in much better health than last winter. His son John was ill for some time after getting his Fellowship, but is now in tolerable health, and seems to be very happy among us, though we have each and all our share of apprehension and uneasiness. Fires, riots, and burking, not to speak of cholera, haunt every family circle. This morning is so warm and sunny that I now sit opposite an open window.

Were you here on this day you would say our country wants not summer, and leafy trees, to make it beautiful.

We shall expect and wish for your promised long letter, if you do not write a short one to tell us that you are coming.

I could fill my scraps of paper, under the seal, etc., but am called away, so God bless you.

Ever your affectionate friend,

D. WORDSWORTH.

Christopher Wordsworth is in Italy. Charles has pupils at Oxford.[1]

DXLVII

William Wordsworth to J. K. Miller[2]

RYDAL MOUNT, KENDAL, Dec. 17, 1831.

My dear Sir,

You have imputed my silence, I trust, to some cause neither disagreeable to yourself nor unworthy of me. Your letter of the 26th of November had been misdirected to Penrith, where the postmaster detained it some time, expecting probably that I would come to that place, which I have often occasion to visit. When it reached me I was engaged in assisting my wife to make out some of my mangled and almost illegible MSS, which inevitably involved me in endeavours to correct and improve them. My eyes are subject to frequent inflammations, of which I had an attack (and am still suffering from it) while that was going on. You would, nevertheless, have heard from me almost as soon as I received

[1] W. E. Gladstone was one of them. — Ed.

[2] The Vicar of Walkeringham in Nottingham. — Ed.

your letter could I have replied to it in terms in any degree accordant to my wishes. Your exhortations troubled me in a way you cannot be in the least aware of; for I have been repeatedly urged by some of my most valued friends, and at times by my own conscience, to undertake the task you have set before me. But I will deal frankly with you. A conviction of my incompetence to do justice to the momentous subject has kept me, and I fear will keep me, silent. My sixty-second year will soon be completed, and though I have been favoured thus far in health and strength beyond most men of my age, yet I feel its effects upon my spirits; they sink under a pressure of apprehension to which, at an earlier period of my life, they would probably have been superior. There is yet another obstacle: I am no ready master of prose writing, having been little practised in the art. This last consideration will not weigh with you; nor would it have done with myself a few years ago; but the bare mention of it will serve to show that years have deprived me of courage, in the sense the word bears when applied by Chaucer to the animation of birds in spring time.

What I have already said precludes the necessity of otherwise confirming your assumption that I am opposed to the spirit you so justly characterise as revolutionary. To your opinions upon this subject my judgment (if I may borrow your own word) "responds." Providence is now trying this empire through her political institutions. Sound minds find their expediency in principles; unsound, their principles in expediency. On the proportion of these minds to each other the issue depends. From calculations of partial expediency in opposition to general principles, whether those calculations be governed by fear or presumption, nothing but mischief is to

be looked for; but, in the present stage of our affairs, the class that does the most harm consists of well-intentioned men, who, being ignorant of human nature, think that they may help the thorough-paced reformers and revolutionists to a certain point, then stop, and that the machine will stop with them. After all, the question is, fundamentally, one of piety and morals; of piety, as disposing men who are anxious for social improvement to wait patiently for God's good time; and of morals, as guarding them from doing evil that good may come, or thinking that any ends can be so good as to justify wrong means for attaining them. In fact, means, in the concerns of this life, are infinitely more important than ends, which are to be valued mainly according to the qualities and virtues requisite for their attainment; and the best test of an end being good is the purity of the means, which, by the laws of God and our nature, must be employed in order to secure it. Even the interests of eternity become distorted the moment they are looked at through the medium of impure means. Scarcely had I written this, when I was told by a person in the Treasury, that it is intended to carry the Reform Bill by a new creation of peers. If this be done, the constitution of England will be destroyed, and the present Lord Chancellor, after having contributed to murder it, may consistently enough pronounce, in his place, its *éloge funèbre!*

I turn with pleasure to the sonnets you have addressed to me, and if I did not read them with unqualified satisfaction it was only from consciousness that I was unworthy of the encomiums they bestowed upon me.

Among the papers I have lately been arranging are passages that would prove, as forcibly as anything of mine that has been published, you were not mistaken

in your supposition that it is the habit of my mind inseparably to connect loftiness of imagination with that humility of mind which is best taught in Scripture.

Hoping that you will be indulgent to my silence, which has been, from various causes, protracted contrary to my wish,

Believe me to be, dear sir,
Very faithfully yours,
Wm. Wordsworth.

DXLVIII

William Wordsworth to Correspondent Unknown

[No name or date,] [1831.]

My dear Sir,

On the other side see a list of *errata*, some of which are so important and so mischievous to the sense that I beg they may be struck off instantly upon a slip of paper or separate leaf, and inserted in such books as are not yet dispersed. For one of these *errata*, perhaps more, I am answerable.

Tell Mr. Hine,[1] to whom I wish to write as soon as I can find time, that I think the collection judiciously made. When you mentioned "notes," I was afraid of them, and I regret much the one at the end was not suppressed; nor is that about the editorial nut-cracks happily executed. But Mr. Hine is an original person, and therefore allowance must be made for his oddities. He feels the poetry, and that is enough. His preface does him great credit.

Ever and most truly yours,
Wm. Wordsworth.

[1] Joseph Hine, the compiler of a volume of *Selections from the Poems of William Wordsworth* (1831). — Ed.

DXLIX

William Wordsworth to Basil Montagu

[1831.]

. . . What you Londoners may think of public affairs I know not; but I forebode the not very distant overthrow of the Institutions under which this country has so long prospered. The Liberals of our neighbourhood tell me that the mind of the nation has outgrown its Institutions; rather say, I reply, that it has shrunk and dwindled from them, as the body of a sick man does from his clothes.

We are on fire with zeal to educate the poor, which would be all very well if that zeal did not blind us to what we stand still more in need of, an improved education of the middle and upper classes; which ought to begin in our great Public Schools, thence ascend to the Universities (from which the first suggestion should come), and descend to the very nursery.

If the books from which your *Selections*[1] are made were the favourite reading of men of rank and influence, I should dread little from the discontented in any class. But what hope is there of such a rally in our debilitated intellects? The soundest hearts I meet with are, with few exceptions, Americans. They seem to have a truer sense of the benefits of our government than we ourselves have. Farewell, with many thanks.

Yours faithfully,

W. W.

[1] The volume was probably his *Selections from the Works of Taylor, Hooker, Hall, and Lord Bacon, with an Analysis of the Advancement of Learning.* — Ed.

DL

William Wordsworth to Christopher Wordsworth

[1831.]

My dear Brother,

. . . I have myself been moving about a good deal, twice on business; it is lucky for me that my engagements of that kind must of necessity lead me through a beautiful country. Last Friday I was called to Ulverstone. I went down the side of Coniston water; and returned by Broughton up the Duddon, and over Wrynose. The vale of Duddon I had never seen at this season, and was much charmed with it. Most of the cottages are embowered in fir trees mixed with sycamore, and in laurel, which thrives luxuriantly in the sheltered vale, and at this season is most pleasant to look upon. John[1] was my companion; we parted five miles up the Duddon, he turning up over Birker Moor for Whitehaven. . . .

What you tell us of Mr. Rose's[2] success as a preacher is highly gratifying. He is a sincere, devout man, and, I suppose, very industrious. How honourable is it to your University that such crowds go to hear him! He is out, or you are out, about *Laodamia*. No stanza is omitted.[3] The last but one is, however, substantially altered. I have disliked the alteration; but I cannot bring my mind to reject it. As first written[4] the heroine was dismissed to happiness in elysium. To what purpose then

[1] Probably his son, although the poet had two nephews who were named John. — Ed.

[2] Hugh James Rose. — Ed.

[3] In the text of the edition of 1827. — Ed.

[4] In the edition of 1815. — Ed.

the mission of Protesilaus? He exhorts her to moderate her passion, the exhortation is fruitless, and no punishment follows. So it stood. At present[1] she is placed among unhappy ghosts for disregard of the exhortation. Virgil also places her there; but compare the two passages, and give me your opinion. I have said any punishment, stopping short of the future world, would have been reasonable; but not the melancholy one I have imposed, as she was not a voluntary suicide. Who shall decide, when doctors disagree? Do not let your etymological researches interfere with your fellowship studies. . . .

Ever faithfully yours,

W. W.

DLI

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

Saturday, [1831.]

My dear Sir,

It was taking no small liberty to entangle you and Mrs. Kenyon in our little economical arrangements. I am pleased, however, with having done so; as it has been the occasion of my hearing from you again. Your eloquence, as the heart has so much to do in it, has prevailed, and we will order a chaise to be here on Wednesday next in time for our reaching Brighton by five — perhaps earlier — but if the day prove fine I should like to stop an hour at Lewes to look round me.

You seem to lead a dissipated life, you and Mrs. Kenyon; but I have no right to reproach you. I have left

[1] In the edition of 1827, and in all subsequent ones. — Ed.

my brother's quiet fireside[1] for the last two days to dine with two several magistrates at Uckfield, where, of course, I heard rather too much of obstinate juries (grand and petty), burnings, poor rates, cash payments, and that everlasting incubus of universal agricultural distress.

Five times have I dined while at Buxted at the table of an earl, and twice in the company of a prince.[2] Therefore let you and Mrs. Kenyon prepare yourselves for something stately and august in my deportment and manners! But king, queen, prince, princess, dukes, etc., are common articles at Brighton, so that I must descend from my elevation, or pass for a downright Malvolio!

I congratulate you upon being *un*radicalized. I wish, however, the change had taken place under less threatening circumstances. The idle practice of recrimination is becoming general. The Whigs upbraid the Tories as authors of the mischief which all feel, by withstanding reform so obstinately; and the Tories reproach the Whigs with having done all the harm by incessant *bawling* for it. . . .

[1] Dr. Christopher Wordsworth was rector of Buxted-with-Uckfield from 1820 to 1846. — Ed.

[2] There he met William the Fourth, and Queen Adelaide. — Ed.

1832

DLII

William Wordsworth to John Kenyon

RYDAL MOUNT, 26th January, [1832.]

My dear Mr. Kenyon,

You have enriched my house by a very valuable present, an entire collection of all that it is desirable to possess among Hogarth's prints. The box also contained a quarto volume, *Hogarth Illustrated*, and three volumes of a French work for Mr. Southey, which shall be forwarded to him. I have been thus particular as, because there was no letter within the box, perhaps it was not made up under your own eye, and I am now at a loss where to direct to you.

We are great admirers of Hogarth, and there are perhaps few houses to which such a collection would be more welcome; and living so much in the country, as we all do, it is both gratifying and instructive to have such scenes of London life to recur to, as this great master has painted.

You are probably aware that he was of Westmorland extraction. His name is very common hereabouts, and it is amusing to speculate on what his genius might have produced if, instead of being born and bred in London, — whither his father went from Westmorland, — he had been

early impressed by the romantic scenery of this neighbourhood, and had watched the manners and employments of our rustics. It is remarkable that his pictures, differing in this from the Dutch and Flemish masters, are almost exclusively confined to indoor scenes or city life. Is this to be regretted? I cannot but think it is, for he was a most admirable painter, as may be seen by his works in the British Gallery; and how pleasant would it have been to have had him occasionally show his knowledge of character, manners, and passion by groups under the shade of trees, and by the side of waters, in appropriate rural dresses. He reminds me both of Shakespeare and Chaucer; but these great poets seem happy in softening and diversifying their views of life, as often as they can, by metaphors and images from rural nature, or by shifting the scene of action into the quiet of groves or forests. What an exquisite piece of relief of this kind occurs in *The Merchant of Venice*, where, after the agitating trial of Antonio, we have Lorenzo and Jessica sitting in the open air on the bank on which the moonlight is sleeping — but enough.

Since I last heard from you I have received, and carefully read, with great pleasure, the poems of your friend Baillie. The scenes among which they were written are mainly unknown to me, for I never was farther south in France than St. Valier on the Rhone, where I turned off to the Grand Chartreuse, a glorious place. Were you ever there? I think you told me you were.

Mr. B. has, however, interested me very much in his sketches of those countries, and strengthened the desire I have had all my life to see them, particularly the Roman antiquities there, which H. C. Robinson tells me are greatly superior to any in Italy, a few in Rome excepted.

I do not know where Mr. Baillie is now to be addressed. I beg, therefore, if you be in communication with him, or with any of his friends who are, you would be so kind as to have my thanks conveyed to him, both for his little volume and the accompanying letter.

It is now time to say a word or two about ourselves. We are all well, except my sister, who, you will be sorry to hear, has been five weeks confined to her room by a return of the inflammatory complaint which shattered her constitution three years ago. She is, God be thanked, convalescent, and will be able to take her place at our fireside in a day or two, if she goes on as well as lately.

We long to know something about yourself, Mrs. Kenyon, and your brother. Pray write to us soon.

We have had a most charming winter for weather; Hastings could scarcely be warmer; and as to beauty, the situation of Rydal Mount at this season is matchless. I shall direct to your brother-in-law's house, as the best chance for my letter reaching you.

Farewell, and believe me, with every good wish,

Faithfully yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DLIII

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 17th, 1832.

. . . As you have done me the honour of asking my opinion on Lord H.'s [1] letter, I will give it without reserve. . . . The facts upon which Lord H.'s proposal of compromise is grounded are an increased majority in the Commons

[1] Lord Holland. — Ed.

in favour of the bill, and a belief that the Ministers have a *carte blanche* for creating Peers to carry it. . . . Is it not in the power of any councillors having access to the King to convince him not only of the ruinous tendency of such a step, but to make him feel, as a point of duty, that whatever power the forms of law may give him to create Peers for setting aside their deliberate resolve, the *spirit* of the Constitution allows him no right to do so? for the application of such power to particular emergencies is subversive of the principle for which the Peers mainly exist. Again, the Ministers opened the question of reform with a most solemn declaration that it was a measure indispensable for the preservation of the Constitution, and adopted in order to preserve it. Yet for the sake of carrying their bill they are prepared to destroy a vital organ of that Constitution. A virtual destruction it certainly would be; for it would convert the House of Lords into a mere slave of any succeeding Ministry, which, should it not bend to threats, would immediately create new votes to counterbalance the Opposition. Cannot, then, Lord Grey and his coadjutors be brought — by a respect for reason, or by a sense of shame from being involved in such a contradiction and absurdity — to desist from that course? . . .

As to the alternative of compromise, I agree with Mr. Southey in thinking that little is to be gained by it but time for profiting by contingencies. Would the House of Lords be sure of making such alterations in their committee as would render the bill much less mischievous? or, if they should, would the Lower House pass the bill so amended? The manner in which the committee of the Commons dealt with it is far from encouraging. . . . Suppose, however, the bill to be much improved in passing

through the committee of the Lords, and accepted by the Commons, how do we then stand? We have a House of Lords, not overwhelmed indeed by new members, but in spirit broken, and brought down upon its knees. The bill is passed, and Parliament, I presume, speedily dissolved; for the agitators of the political unions would clamour for this, which neither the present Ministry, nor any likely to succeed them, would resist, even did they think it right to do so. Then comes a new House of Commons, to what degree radical, under the best possible modification of the present bill, one fears to think. It proposes measures which the House of Lords would resist as revolutionary, but dares not for fear of being served in the way that was threatened to secure the passing of the reform bill; and so we hasten step by step to the destruction of that Constitution in form, the spirit of which had been destroyed before. . . .

If a new reform bill cannot be brought forward and carried by a strong appeal to the sense, and not to the passions, of the country, I think there is no rational ground for hope. And here one is reminded of the folly and the rashness, not to touch upon the injustice, of creating such a gap in the old constituency as it is scarcely possible to fill up without endangering the existence of the State. Nevertheless, I cannot but think that the country might still be preserved from revolution by a more sane Ministry, which would undertake the question of reform with prudence and sincerity, combining with that measure wiser views in finance. . . .

It has ever been the habit of my mind to trust that expediency will come out of fidelity to principles, rather than to seek my principle of action in calculations of expediency. . . .

DLIV

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

RYDAL MOUNT, Feb. 24th, 1832.

My Lord,

. . . The ministers have declared over and over that they will not abate a jot of the *principle* of the bill. Through the whole of the debates in both houses, but particularly in the Commons, there has been a confusion between principle and the rules and measures of applying principle. The main or fundamental principle of this bill is an assumed necessity for an increase of democratic power in the legislature; accordingly, the ministers have resolved upon a sweeping destruction. This, which may be called a rule, or subsidiary principle, has been applied to the existing constituency in its three great branches, — the Burgage Tenures, the Freemen, and the Freeholders. What havoc has been made in the first we all know. The second, the Freemen, were destroyed, and are restored. Upon the third I cannot speak with the precision which I could wish, not distinctly recollecting the manner in which the votes of a portion of this body are to be affected by the franchise conferred upon them as £10 voters in towns, or retained as Freemen. None of this class of voters have been deprived of their right of voting without an equivalent, so that the change which time has effected in making — by the reduction in the value of money — the body of Freeholders so democratic, is left in its full force, and made more dangerous by new circumstances. Now, is it to be expected that the Lords in committee could succeed in a scheme for a less sweeping and less unjust destruction of the old constituency? Lord H. himself does not seem to expect it.

The only source, then, to which we can look for any improvement must be in supplying the gap in a less objectionable way. Numbers and property are the principles here. In order to foresee how the Ministry are likely to act, we must inquire how their power is composed. They know themselves that if it were not for the reform bill they must go out instantly. As constitutional Whigs, supposed to be actuated by a sincere wish to preserve the British Constitution, the leaders of them are already, as a party, annihilated. They are the tools of men bent on the destruction of Church and State. Even in their opinions many who continue to call themselves Whigs are scarcely by a shade distinguishable from the Radicals. But though such is the character of so many of their prominent leaders, there is diffused through the country a large body of Whig partisans, who, could their eyes be opened, would cease to support them, especially if they had hopes of a more moderate measure from other quarters — but they are not likely to be undeceived till too late. The Ministry, I repeat, are under Radical dictation; does not the mere act of the late appointment to the Secretaryship of War show it? Still further to propitiate the political unions, Hume and Warburton will follow him into office, who can say how soon? Whatever, therefore, the Ministry in conscience think prudent and proper, they would not have the courage to act upon it, even supposing, as Lord H. suggests, that the more moderate men in the House, and those who have the fear of a Radical Parliament hanging over their heads, should support such improvement coming from the Lords. The Ministry would act, as your Lordship anticipates, by creating new peers, by seduction, and, I lament to say, by intimidation, and encouraging or conniving at agitation out of doors.

But to come to particulars. Could the £10 franchise be altered, or the delegation — for I will not call it representation — from London and its neighbourhood? As to the large towns all over the country, a worse source for a new constituency than £10 voters, they do not — in my judgment — contain. But, take smaller places, and less populous districts. Mr. Senhouse thinks £10 not a bad qualification for Cumberland. Look then at Cockermouth, and read Mr. Green's late advertisement. He may be a man of poor talents, and sorry discretion, but he is no stranger there. He was born, bred, and has long been a resident in the place. He may therefore reasonably be supposed to be acquainted with the present opinions and dispositions of the £10 renters in that town, to whom he would recommend himself, in the event of the bill passing. He tells them "that he has for many years been reproached for being a Jacobin, a Radical, and a Leveller" — unjustly, he insinuates, — that a reform is wanted for making *a great change* in the present state of things. "Do not, however, suppose," he adds, "that I wish to see reform run into revolution. The conduct of the King, forming as it does a glorious contrast to that of most of the Sovereigns that for half a century have appeared in Europe, *has justly entitled him to the preservation of his crown*, etc. The conduct of the Ministers, too, who have aided and counselled him in his efforts for the public good, must not be forgotten; they all, or nearly all, belong to — or are connected with — the hereditary aristocracy, and by their services have at once entitled themselves to our gratitude," etc., etc. Now what is all this but to say that the moment the king or the aristocracy do not please Mr. G. and his future constituents he will turn upon them, and, if he can, will

destroy the monarchy and peerage together. Judge, my Lord, of my indignation when I read this trash — contemptible, were it not so pernicious in this emergency — addressed to the inhabitants of my native town.

Now for the delegation of London, etc., with the vast population there and in its neighbourhood, to back the agitators whenever they shall choose to call upon it. Can Lord H. expect that the Ministry would consent to any improvement in this department? Yet nothing is more clear to a sane mind than that the government by King, Lords, and Commons, and not only government, but property, in a state of society so artificial as ours, cannot long stand up against such a pressure. When I was in London last spring I mixed a good deal with the Radicals, and know from themselves what their aims are, and how they expect to accomplish them. One person at least, now high in office, is looked up to as their future head, and allowed at present to play a false part. It is not rationally to be expected that the present ministry would allow the delegation, as I have called it, of London and its neighbourhood, to be of a less obnoxious construction than the bill makes it.

Let us now look at the other side — the uncompromising resistance and its apprehended consequences in swamping the House of Lords, and passing the bill in its present state, not perhaps without popular commotions. The risk attending such resistance with this or any ministry not composed of firm-minded and truly intelligent men is, I own, so great as to alarm any one; but I should have no fear of popular commotion were the Government what it might be, and ought to be. The overthrow of the government of Charles X, and the late events in Bristol, prove what mischief may be done by a

mere rabble, if the executive be either faithless or foolish. Seeing the perilous crisis to which we are come, I am nevertheless persuaded that, could a conservative Ministry be established, the certain ruin that will follow on the passing of this bill might be avoided. Thousands of respectable people have supported both bills, not as approving of a measure of this character or extent, but from fear that otherwise no reform at all would take place. Such men would be ready to support more moderate plans if they found the executive in hands that could be relied upon. Too true it is, no doubt, as Lord H. has observed, that opinions as to the extent and nature of advisable reform differ so widely as to throw great difficulties in the way of a new bill. But these, in my humble opinion, might be got over, so far as to place us upon ground allowing hope for the future.

In looking at the rule for applying the principle of numbers to supply a part of the new constituency, or govern the retention of the old, I have only considered London and its neighbourhood. As far as I know, this principle is altogether an innovation, and what contradictions and anomalies does it involve? The Lords would not probably attempt an improvement here. Had such a rule come down to us from past times, had we been habituated to it, it might have been possible to improve its application. But how can any thinking man expect that with the example of America and France before us — not deterring the people, but inciting them to imitation — this innovation can ever find rest but in universal suffrage. Manchester is only to have two members, with its vast population, and Cockermouth is to retain one with its bare five thousand! Will not Manchester and Birmingham, etc., point on the one hand to

the increased representation of London and its neighbourhood, and on the other to the small places which, for their paltry numbers, are allowed to retain one or two votes in the House; and to towns of the size of Kendal and Whitehaven, which for the first time are to send each a member? Will Manchester and Birmingham be content? Is it reasonable that they should be content with the principle of numbers so unjustly and absurdly applied? This anomaly, which is ably treated in the *American Review*, brings one to the character and tendency of this reform.

As Sir J. B. Walsh observes in his pamphlet, from which I saw an extract the other day in a newspaper: "Extensive, sudden, and experimental innovation is diametrically opposed to the principle of progressiveness, which in every art, science, and path of human intellect is gradual. . . ."

. . . Our Constitution was not preconceived and planned beforehand; it grew under the protection of Providence, as a skin grows to, with, and for the human body. Our Ministers would flay this body, and present us, instead of its natural skin, with a garment made to order, which, if it be not rejected, will prove such a shirt as, in the fable, drove Hercules to madness and self-destruction. May God forgive that part of them who, acting in this affair with their eyes open, have already gone so far towards committing a greater political crime than any recorded in history! . . .

DLV

William Wordsworth to the Editor of the Philological Museum

[Rydal Mount, 1832.]

. . . Your letter reminding me of an expectation I some time since held out to you, of allowing some specimens of my translation from the *Æneid* to be printed in the *Philological Museum*, was not very acceptable; for I had abandoned the thought of ever sending into the world any part of that experiment — it was nothing more — an experiment begun for amusement, and, I now think, a less fortunate one than when I first named it to you. Having been displeased, in modern translations, with the additions of incongruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing; but I became convinced that a spirited translation can scarcely be accomplished in the English language without admitting a principle of compensation. On this point, however, I do not wish to insist; and merely send the following passage, taken at random, from a desire to comply with your request. . . .

W. W.

DLVI

William Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale

[1832.]

My Lord,

Many thanks for your obliging letter. I shall be much gratified if you happen to like my translation, and thankful for any remarks with which you may honour me. I

have made so much progress with the second book that I defer sending the former till that is finished. It takes in many places a high tone of passion, which I would gladly succeed in rendering. When I read Virgil in the original I am moved; but not so much so by the translation; and I cannot but think this is owing to a defect in the diction, which I have endeavoured to supply, with what success you will easily be enabled to judge.

Ever, my Lord,

Most faithfully your obliged friend and servant,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DLVII

William Wordsworth to Henry Taylor

[1832.]

. . . You are young, and therefore will naturally have more hope of public affairs than I can. Seeing principles — which after all are the only things worth contending about — sacrificed every day, in a manner which I have foreseen since the passing of the reform bill, and indeed long before, does not the less disturb me. The predominance given in Parliament to the dissenting interest, and to towns which have grown up recently, without a possibility of their being trained in habits of attachment either to the Constitution in Church and State, or what remained of the feudal frame of society in this country, will inevitably bring on a political and social revolution. What may be suffered by the existing generation no man can foresee, but the loss of liberty for a time will be the inevitable consequence. Despotism will be established, and the whole battle will have to be fought over by subsequent generations. . . .

DLVIII

William Wordsworth to Alaric Watts

[1832.]

My dear Sir,

I have to thank you, I presume, for a copy of *The Souvenir* for 1832, just received. . . . I have been much pleased with Mrs. Watts's *Choice*, Mrs. Howitt's *Infancy, Youth, and Age*, and your own *Conversazione* — a great deal too clever for the subjects which you have here and there condescended to handle. The rest of the volume I shall hope to peruse at leisure. I fear the state of the times must affect the annuals, as well as all other literature. I am told, indeed, that many of the booksellers are threatened with ruin. I enclose a sonnet for your next volume, if you choose to insert it. It would have appeared with more advantage in this year's, but was not written in time. It is proper I should mention that it has been sent to Sir Walter Scott and one or two of my other friends; so that you had best not print it till towards the latter sheets of your volume, lest it should steal by chance into publication, for which I have given no permission. Should that happen I will send you some other piece.

I remain, my dear sir,

Sincerely your obliged

Wm. Wordsworth.

DLIX

William Wordsworth to John Gardner

RYDAL MOUNT, March 12th, [1832.]

The intended edition of my poems is to be compressed into four volumes. There will be no additions beyond what appeared in *The Keepsake* two or three years ago, and a sonnet or two which have already seen the light.

. . . It is to be apprehended that the French edition will still continue to injure the English sale.

I say nothing of politics. The foolish and wicked only appear to be active, and therefore it is plain that confusion and misery will follow. . . .

DLX

William Wordsworth to William Rowan Hamilton

MORESBY, June 25, 1832.

. . . My dear sister has been languishing more than seven months in a sick-room, nor dare I or any of her friends entertain a hope that her strength will ever be restored; and the course of public affairs, as I think I told you before, threatens, in my view, destruction to the institutions of the country; an event which, whatever may rise out of it hereafter, cannot but produce distress and misery for two or three generations at least. At any time I am at best but a poor and unpunctual correspondent, yet I am pretty sure you would have heard from me but for this reason; therefore let the statement pass for an apology as far as you think fit. . . .

It gives me much pleasure that you and Coleridge have met, and that you were not disappointed in the conversation of a man from whose writings you had previously drawn so much delight and improvement. He and my beloved sister are the two beings to whom my intellect is most indebted, and they are now proceeding, as it were *pari passu*, along the path of sickness — I will not say towards the grave, but I trust towards a blessed immortality.

It was not my intention to write so seriously; my heart is full, and you must excuse it. You do not tell me how you like Cambridge as a place, nor what you thought of its buildings and other works of art. Did you not see Oxford as well? It has greatly the advantage over Cambridge in its happy intermixture of streets, churches, and collegiate buildings.

. . . A fortnight ago I came hither to my son and daughter, who are living a gentle, happy, quiet, and useful life together. My daughter Dora is also with us. . . . A week ago Mr. W. S. Landor, the poet and author of *Imaginary Conversations* (which probably have fallen in your way), appeared here. We had never met before, though several letters had passed between us, and as I had not heard that he was in England, my gratification in seeing him was heightened by surprise. We passed a day together at the house of my friend Mr. Rawson, on the banks of Wast-Water. His conversation is lively and original, his learning great, though he will not allow it, and his laugh the heartiest I have heard for a long time. It is, I think, not much less than twenty years since he left England for France and afterwards Italy, where he hopes to end his days, — nay, has fixed near Florence upon the spot where he wishes to be buried.[1]

[1] His grave is in the Protestant Cemetery at Florence, not far from where Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Arthur Hugh Clough were afterwards buried. — Ed.

DLXI

William Wordsworth to Henry Crabb Robinson

RYDAL MOUNT, July 21st, [Postmark, 1832.]

My dear Friend,

We were truly glad to hear from you after so long a silence. The ladies you mention are distant relations of ours, and we should have been glad to serve them had it been in our power. One of them wrote to my sister above a year ago, and several letters passed between them. Long after my sister had fallen ill, and only a few weeks ago, Mrs. Wordsworth took up the correspondence, and told them, in reply to a like request, that there were no collections of pictures in this neighbourhood that she was acquainted with save the Earl of Lonsdale's, which by the bye is very small. Mrs. W. added such observations as she thought right upon the subject. Mr. Bolton, of Storrs upon Windermere, has also some pictures, and I am told that a Mr. Maucker of Liverpool, who has lately settled near Ambleside, has also some good ones, but I have never seen them. I regret not being able to do anything to further the views of these ladies. This country holds out little temptation in their way. Should it suit them to take a lodging at Bowness, there would be no difficulty in getting access to Mr. Bolton's pictures; nor, were the ladies at Ambleside, to Mr. Maucker's, though I cannot say he is of my acquaintance. As to the pictures at Lowther, they could only be copied by some person staying in the house, there being no accommodation for lodgers in the neighbourhood.

There used to be a few Claude's at Lord George Cavendish's (Holkar Hall), near Cartmell, not far from their

present abode; and, as the family are seldom there, these might easily be got at.

You will grieve to hear that your invalid friend, my dear sister, never quits her room but for a few minutes, and we think is always weakened by the exertion. She is, however, God be praised, in a contented and happy state of mind. . . .

To my great surprise and pleasure Landor appeared at Moresby near Whitehaven (having come by steam from Liverpool), when I was on a visit there to my son. I followed him to Wastdale, where I spent a day in the same house with him. We went on through Borrowdale to Mr. Southey's. He appears to be a most warm-hearted man, his conversation very animated, and he has the heartiest and happiest laugh I ever heard from a man of his years.

You designate yourself "a conservative Whig." I could not but smile at both substantive and adjective. You and men of your opinions have piloted the vessel, and navigated her into the breakers, where neither Whig nor Tory can prevent her being dashed to pieces. I shall look out for the quietest nook I can find in the center of Austria, where I shall be glad to give you welcome to a crust when you shall be tired of improving a thankless world.

You would observe that a cheap edition of my poems is advertised in four volumes. Help the sale, if you can, till I get back my own money, which I shall have to advance to the amount of four or five hundred pounds. My terms of publication are two thirds of the risk and expense for what the publisher calls two thirds of the profit — but this if I recollect right I told you before.

Yesterday I was on the top of Helvellyn with my friend Mr. Julius Hare of Trinity College, Dr. Arnold, Master

of Rugby, — as keen a reformer as yourself, or any other dissenting Tory, — and Mr. Hamilton, author of *Cyril Thornton*, etc., etc., also a brother of Professor Buckland. We tempered our brandy with water from the highest, and we will therefore infer the purest, spring in England, and had as pleasant a day as any middle-aged gentlemen need wish for, except for certain sad recollections that weighed upon my heart. Once I was upon this summit with Sir Humphry Davy and Sir Walter Scott; and many times have I trod it with my nearest and dearest relatives and friends, several of whom are gone — and others going — to their last abode. But I have touched upon too melancholy a string. Life is at best but a dream, and in times of political commotion it is too often crowded with ghostly images. God preserve us all!

Affectionately yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DLXII

William Wordsworth to Edward Moxon

12th September, 1832.

Dear Mr. Moxon,

Mr. Pickersgill is the bearer of this to London. He has been here painting my portrait. We all like it exceedingly, so far as it is carried. It will be finished in London. Should you wish to see it in its present state, you can call at his house. . . .

My sister does not recover strength. . . .

W. Wordsworth.

DLXIII

William Wordsworth to Thomas Arnold

RYDAL MOUNT, Tuesday, Sept. 19th, 1832.

My dear Sir,

Yesterday Mr. Greenwood of Grasmere called, with a letter he had just received from Mr. Simpson — the owner of Fox How — empowering Mr. G. to sign for him an agreement, either with yourself or any friend you may appoint, for the sale of that estate for £800; possession to be given, and the money paid, next Candlemas. . . . I need not say that it will give me pleasure to facilitate the purchase, as far as is in my power. . . .

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

DLXIV

Dora Wordsworth to Mrs. Lawrence[1]

RYDAL MOUNT, Sept. 27th, 1832.

My dear Madam,

My father bids me say that he has great pleasure in sending you *Yarrow Revisited* for your own portfolio. I have also added to this poem a sonnet (which we think very fine) written at the same time. Now that the great Light which called forth these lines is extinguished, perhaps I had done better not to have transcribed them, as they can only fill you with melancholy; but yet when we consider the state of mind in which Sir Walter must have

[1] Wife of Charles Lawrence, Wavertree Hall, near Liverpool. — Ed.

been left, had his bodily health recovered its tone, we ought only to rejoice in his "release." This is the word Mr. Lockhart made use of in the note which informed us of his father-in-law's death.

You are most kindly interested in our picture, and will rejoice, I am sure, to hear that we, and all I think who have seen the portrait, consider it as a likeness perfect, and as a picture, so far as it is done, delightful; but I will send a sonnet by the poet himself on the picture which tells everything.

Only the face is finished, and the figure just rubbed in. He is placed on, or rather reclining upon, a rock on his own terrace with his cloak thrown over him, and a sweet view of Rydal Lake in the distance. The attitude is particularly easy, and the whole thing perfectly free from anything like affectation. Mr. Pickersgill arrived the evening of the day on which we parted from you at Storrs, and remained with us ten days, and ten more pleasant days were never passed. The garret was our studio, our lowly cottage not affording a light sufficiently high for a painter in any other corner. And here we received all our company, whomsoever they might be, Mr. Pickersgill not caring how full the room was. He too, when you know him, is a most interesting person, so completely wrapped up in his pictures. And you may well imagine how grateful we feel to him for giving us such a picture of such a father. But enough; I am forgetting that every one cannot care about this said poet quite as much as his daughter does. We hope, indeed we feel all but sure, there will be a print from this picture, at least if about a hundred and fifty names can be procured (of which there can be no doubt, I think). Just to secure the engraver and publisher, the subscription is a guinea.

Our good friend Mr. Bolton was the only fault-finder of among upwards of a hundred persons who saw it. He said they had made him "too quiet," "too poetical"; he would have liked him "more animated." These faults I consider the charm of the picture. There is quite an angelic sweetness of expression with deep and quiet and happy thought. My aunt, Miss Wordsworth, is pretty well, but on the whole I fear I must not say better. Mr. Pickersgill I do think considered himself quite repaid for the loss of time in coming down by the pleasure which his picture gave to our dear invalid. We can never hope that she will see it in its finished state. I feel as if I ought to apologize for troubling you with so long a letter, but that would only add to its length. Trusting therefore to your kind nature to forgive me for love of my father's muse,

I remain, my dear madam,

Yours very sincerely and much obliged,

DORA WORDSWORTH.

DLXV

Dora Wordsworth to William Pearson

RYDAL MOUNT, Nov. 18th, 1832.

Dear Mr. Pearson,

Many thanks for your most interesting letter, which gave great pleasure at Rydal Mount, especially in our sick chamber. You know what a lover my dear aunt is, both of animate and inanimate Nature, and now that she is compelled to rest content with enjoying her at second-hand, you may guess how pleasant your little history of our favourite robin-redbreast was to her subdued but cheerful spirit; and so simply and prettily told! My

father wishes for your permission (if you can give it), should an opportunity occur, to send it to the *Naturalist's Magazine*, or some other publication that receives like histories. . . .

Now that all the birds of passage have left our mountain regions we are but seldom interrupted by strangers, so my father hopes you will find your way more frequently to Rydal Mount, for it will be ill luck, indeed, if you do not find him at this season at, or near, home.

He and my mother and I passed the week before last with our friends, the Marshalls, at Halsteads on Ullswater. The weather was generally very fine, so that the noble scenery was looking its very best, and made me, I confess, a little jealous for our vales, certainly less grand as a whole, though perhaps, in their *minutiæ*, they may vie with those of Ullswater.

Have you seen the first numbers of Mr. Hartley Coleridge's book, *The Worthies of Yorkshire and Lancashire?* It was lent to us the other day. I have, as yet, but just peeped into it; but it seems well worth reading, as all that comes from his pen must be. It grieves one to think that so fine a mind should turn to so little account as his has done, and I fear will do; but genius, and commonplace industry and regularity, seem almost incompatible. . . . I have given you so long a family history that it needs some apology. I think I am unskillful in escaping from such snares. I will at any rate keep clear of making others for myself by bringing my epistle at once to a conclusion, and begging you to accept the kind regards of all this family,

Believe me to remain,

Yours very truly,

DORA WORDSWORTH.

DLXVI

William Wordsworth to Lady Frederick Bentinck

[1832?]

. . . You were not mistaken in supposing that the state of public affairs has troubled me much. I cannot see how the government is to be carried on, but by such sacrifices to the democracy as will, sooner or later, upset everything. Whoever governs, it will be by out-bidding for popular favour those who went before them. Sir Robert Peel was obliged to give way in his government to the spirit of reform, as it is falsely called; these men are going beyond him; and if ever he shall come back, it will only, I fear, be to carry on the movement in a shape somewhat less objectionable than it will take from the Whigs. In the meanwhile the Radicals, or Republicans, are cunningly content to have this work done ostensibly by the Whigs, while in fact they themselves are the Whigs' masters, as the Whigs well know; but they hope to be preserved from destruction by throwing themselves back upon the Tories when measures shall be urged upon them by their masters which they may think too desperate. What I am most afraid of is alterations in the constituency and in the duration of Parliament, which will bring it more and more under the dominion of the lower and lowest classes. On this account I fear the proposed corporation reform, as a step towards household suffrage, vote by ballot, etc. As to a union of the Tories and Whigs in Parliament, I see no prospect of it whatever. To the great Whig lords may be truly applied the expression in *Macbeth*,

> They have eaten of the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner.

. . . I ordered two copies of my new volume to be sent to Cottesmere. And now farewell; and believe me, dear Lady Frederick,

Ever faithfully yours,

Wm. Wordsworth.

DLXVII

William Wordsworth to Mrs. Hemans

Rydal Mount, Nov. 22, [1832.]

Dear Mrs. Hemans,

I will not render this sheet more valueless than at best it will prove, by tedious apologies for not answering your very kind and welcome letter long and long ago. I received it in London, when my mind was in a most uneasy state, and when my eyes were useless both for writing and reading, so that an immediate reply was out of my power; and, since, I have been doubtful where to address you. Accept this, and something better, as my excuse, that I have very often thought of you with kindness and good wishes for your welfare, and that of your fine boys, who must recommend themselves to all that come in their way. Let me thank you in Dora's name for your present of *The Remains of Lucretia Davidson*, a very extraordinary young creature, of whom I had before read some account in Mr. Southey's review of this volume. Surely many things, not often bestowed, must concur to make genius an enviable gift. This truth is painfully forced upon one's attention in reading the effusions and story of this enthusiast, hurried to her grave so early. You have, I understand, been a good deal in Dublin. The place, I hope, has less of the fever of intellectual, or

rather literary, ambition than Edinburgh, and is less disquieted by factions and cabals of persons. As to those of parties, they must be odious and dreadful enough; but since they have more to do with religion, the adherents of the different creeds perhaps mingle little together, and so the mischief to social intercourse, though great, will be somewhat less.

I am not sure but that Miss Jewsbury has judged well in her determination of going to India. Europe is at present a melancholy spectacle, and these two Islands are likely to reap the fruit of their own folly and madness in becoming, for the present generation, the two most unquiet and miserable spots upon the earth. May you, my dear friend, find the advantage of the poetic spirit in raising you, in thought at least, above the contentious clouds! Never before did I feel such reason to be grateful for what little inspiration heaven has graciously bestowed upon my humble intellect. What you kindly wrote upon the interest you took during your travels in my verses could not but be grateful to me, because your own show that in a rare degree you understand and sympathise with me. We are all well, God be thanked. I am a wretched correspondent, as this scrawl abundantly shows. I know also that you have far too much, both of receiving and writing letters, but I cannot conclude without expressing a wish that from time to time you would let us hear from you and yours, and how you prosper. All join with me in kindest remembrance to yourself and your boys, especially to Charles, of whom we know most. Believe me, dear Mrs. Hemans, not the less for my long silence,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

WM. WORDSWORTH.

DLXVIII

William Wordsworth to William Pearson

ADVICE AS TO TRAVEL ON THE CONTINENT

Mr. Wordsworth's Instructions

. . . At Mayence turn from the Rhine to Frankfort, Darmstadt, Heidelberg, by Carlsruhe to Baden-Baden, Strasburg, then by Hornberg or Freiburg to Schaffhausen, see falls of the Rhine, then to Zurich, Wallenstadt lake, up the valley of Glarus, Altorf, Schwytz, Mt. Righi, Lucerne, Lake of Four Cantons, up the banks of the Reuss, over Mt. St. Gothard to Lake Maggiore, Boromean Islands, Lake Lugano, thence to Lake Como (which see perfectly), Varese, Lake Orta, Domo d'Ossola (see religious stations and cells), over the mountain to Brieg in the Valais, turn off to Gemmi Pass, to Kander Grund and Lakes of Thun and Brienz, up the valley of Oberhasli, see falls of the Handec at Meyringen, thence to Lungern Zee, Sarnen, to Berne and Geneva by any way most promising, make the tour round the Lake of Geneva, see Chamouny, see as many of the passes as you can. . . .

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Wordsworth, William, 1770-
1850.

Letters of the Wordsworth
Family from 1787 to 1855 /924/

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